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Woman in Epic and Romance

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WOMAN IN EPIC AND ROMANCE

BY

ALTA GREEN

THESIS

FOR THE

DEGREE OF BACHELOR OF ARTS

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INTRODUCTION.

The place of woman in literature has changed with the change in the type of literature. Her importance has increased as the motivating idea of the literature has changed from one of war and epic enterprises to one of chivalry and knightly tournaments. With the development in the importance of woman has come an increase in her influence and a more decided characterization. In the earliest English literature she is only a figure in the background of the setting; it is not until time and custom have changed the literature that she becomes an active personality in the progression of the story. In taking up this study of woman in epic and romance, I shall first show her position in the epic,- in Beowulf, in the Nibelungenlied, and in the Song of Roland. Then I shall trace the development in woman's importance through the succeeding romances, the earliest English romances, the lai, the courtly and feudal romances, and the stories of Arthurian romance. In the third chapter I shall make a summary of the points made in the two chapters on epic and romance in order to compare and contrast the different phases of the position of woman from the early epics to the later romances.

I

WOMAN IN THE EPIC.

In Beowulf, the earliest English epic, woman has a rather inconspicuous place. Her chief function is to preside at the banquet table in order to pass the mead cup to the victorious heroes, and to bestow gifts upon them. She is portrayed as gracious, dignified, and queenly. All of the women are thought of as queens rather than wives, and there is very little interest in the husband-wife relation itself. Love in the modern sense of romantic love does not exist in Beowulf.

Wealtheow, the queen of Hrothgar, is the most important woman in the poem. She bears herself with true womanly dignity and reserve, and in every way wins the respect and chivalrous homage of the men. When Beowulf comes to the kingdom of Hrothgar to rid the famous banquet hall Heorot of the monster Grendel, there are feasts in his honor. Wealtheow comes into the hall, and"bright with gold, the stately dame by her spouse sat down." After the banquet is over, "came Wealtheow forth,

> queen of Hrothgar, heedful of courtesy,
> gold-decked, greeting the guest in hall;
> and the high-born lady handed the cup
> first to the East-Danes' heir and warden,
> bade him be blithe at the beer-carouse,
> the land's loved one*."

She goes through the hall, bearing the cup to all the warriors,"to younger and older everywhere," until royal-hearted, exalted in mind, she bears the beaker of mead to Beowulf himself,

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*Gummere's translation,ll 612-628

and sagacious in words" addresses the hero in flattering terms.

"She greeted the Geats'lord, God she thanks,
in wisdom's words that her will was granted,
that at last on a hero her hope could lean
for comforts in terror*"

At other feasts in the hall after Beowulf has been victorious in the fight with Grendel and his mother, the queen, "the peaceful tie of peoples", rewards the hero with princely gifts, while Hrothgar's daughter carries around the mead-cup. This daughter, "the gold-decked maid", who seems to make a favorable impression on Beowulf, is promised in marriage to the "glad" son of Froda.

"Sage this seems to the Scyldings' friend,
kingdom's-keeper: he counts it wise
the woman to wed so and ward off feud,
store of slaughter, But seldom ever when
men are slain, does the murder-spear sink but
briefest while, though the bride be fair."**

These marriages for a political motive are common in Anglo-Saxon poetry. There are other instances in Beowulf. The daughter of Hygelac is married to Eofor as a reward for his killing Ongentheow, the Swedish king, and Ingeld and Freawara are married to secure friendly relations between two kingdoms.

Probably it is this custom of political marriage which gained for women the title "freoðu-webbe", a weaver of peace. This metaphor is commonly used in Beowulf, as in Anglo-Saxon poetry in general. The beauty of the metaphor is better appreciated when we remember that the chief occupation of the women at this time

* Beowulf, ll, 625-620
** Beowulf, ll, 2025-2031

was weaving. Given in marriage to settle feuds and cement alliances, woman was a true weaver of peace. Beowulf doubted the efficacy of such marriages, thinking that the peace thus gained ~~is~~ was not always lasting. Still woman is called faithful peace-weaver, and is supposed to live in accordance with her name.

Hygd is represented as all that a wife should be, "not cringing, or niggard of presents." This giving of gifts makes the woman important socially, for the reward of the queen is more valued than that of the king. Though very young, Hygd is wise, virtuous and generous. She loves her people, and when left a widow with a son too young to rule, she studies how best to further their interests and ward off the horrors of war from the land.

The contrast between Hygd and Thrytho, the wife of Offa, who is condemned severely by the author, is distinct.

"and Hygd, right young,
wise and wary, though winters few
in those fortress walls she had found a home,
Haereth's daughter. Nor humble her ways,
nor grudged she gifts to the Geatish men,
of precious treasure. Not Thryth's pride showed she
folk-queen famed, or that fell deceit
was none so daring that durst make bold
(save her lord alone) of the liegemen dear
that lady full in the face to look
but forged fetters be found his lot,
bonds of death - - - - - - - - - - - - - -
- - - - - - - - - - - - - nc queenly way for

woman to practice, though peerless she."*

Thrytho was strong-willed and wicked, but love finally conquered her. The case of Offa and Thrytho is interesting as an early example of the taming of a shrew. After Offa has tamed her through love, she becomes more as the ideal of woman then was, generous, and not cruel and treacherous.

The relations of the women of Beowulf with their children are only hinted at. When Beowulf returns from his struggle with Grendel's mother, Hrothgar speaks of the pride ~~of~~ Beowulf's mother would have had in him, if she were only living. Hildeburg, in the story of the battle of Finnsburg, mourns for the death of her son, weeping at the funeral pyre and singing mournful death songs. Even the mother of Grendel mourns for his death, and tries to avenge it. As for Wealtheow, Mr. Brooke says that her motherhood was first in her heart.** When she sees Beowulf sitting between her sons, she gives him a jewelled collar, and begs his friendly counsel for them. At another time she claims the kindness of Hrothulf for her sons. When Hrothgar proposes giving Beowulf his kingdom for the service he has done in ridding the country of Grendel, Wealtheow reminds him of their own sons whom they must not deprive of their birthright.

We find the women of Beowulf very attractive, though important chiefly for their social positions. They are of noble character, loyal to their husbands, affectionate to their children, tender and pure in heart, with true womanly natures. They are important only in the home life, but there they have an ex-

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*Beowulf -11. 1926-1940.
**Early English Literature. p. 67.

alted, respected place.

2. THE NIBELUNGENLIED.

In the Nibelungenlied woman has a more prominent position. There she begins to form the motive for the heroic deeds of the men, and her desires motivate the actions of the story. The very beginning of the poem is evidence of the advance in woman's importance. After having stated that he is going to tell a wondrous tale, the author says:

" A very noble maiden grew up in Burgundy:
Than hers no greater beauty in any land might be:
The maid was called Kriemhilda- a woman passing fair-
For whose sake many a warrior his life must needs forbear.

To love that lovely maiden seem'd but to be her due;
None bore her spite, and many did for her favour sue,
Fair were beyond all measure her noble form and face:
Her virtues were sufficient all womankind to grace."*

The first incident of the story, following the description of Kriemhilda's three brothers, is a dream of Kriemhilda which her mother Uté interprets. She dreams that she rears a strong, fair falcon, which two eagles rent before her eyes. Her mother's interpretation is that the falcon is to be her noble husband. And although Kriemhilda declares that she cares naught for love, Uté persists in her idea.

Siegfried, urged by his followers and kinsmen to take a wife worthy of his royal position, determines to win Kriemhilda, of whose virtues he has heard many reports. His mother Siegelind

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*Alice Horton's translation. ll. 5-12.

cannot refrain from bitter weeping when he makes his decision known, for she fears that she may lose him through some of Gunther's men. Nevertheless, since she wishes him to appear at his best in Burgundian land, she puts her maidens to making fine apparel, "the best e'er warrior wore," for Siegfried's journey. Her-mother pride will not permit him to go into a strange land illy-dressed.

In Burgundy, Siegfried is received with honor by King Gunther and his men, for people everywhere have heard of Siegfried's wonderful deeds. Tournaments and games, in which Siegfried outstrips all men, are arranged. Still he does not speak of the purpose for which he came, even though the thought of Kriemhilda is always in his mind. Her he never sees, though she can watch him from her window. A natural touch is given her interest in the handsome, strong, young stranger. When the games begin,

"Kriemhilda straightway ran and watched them from
the window, king's daughter tho she were,
Nor while it lasted did she for other pastime care."*

Thus Siegfried waits without speaking for a whole year. Then Gunther receives word that the Saxons are coming to invade his kingdom. Gathering a vast army, he marches against them, and through the valor of Siegfried, the Burgundians are successful. Kriemhilda is so pleased to hear of Siegfried's victory that she rewards the messenger bounteously. To celebrate the success of his army, Gunther plans a tournament at which the ladies shall be present. The ladies are delighted at the prospect of the

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* Niebelungenlied, ll. 533-536.

festival and seek out "all their garments gay, and all the goodly raiment that had been stored away." Their truly feminine vanity would not allow them to appear in anything but the best on this notable occasion. The heroes throng to view the maidens, and especially noble Kriemhilda.

"Then came the lovely maidens: even as morning red
From sombre clouds outbreaking.- - - - - - - - -
- -
Just as the moon in brightness excels the brightest stars,
and, suddenly outshining, athwart the clouds appear;
So seemed she now, compared with dames of fairest guise."*

The greatest reverence is bestowed upon the ladies. All the warriors feel deeply the honor that is being done them. When Siegfried is brought to court, Kriemhilda greets him "with winning modesty," while her cheeks are "lit with crimson." She appears altogether charming, reserved and modest as a maiden should be. On every day of the twelve festival days, Siegfried is allowed to see Kriemhilda, and the two grow more and more in love. The reserve between them has been dissipated so that even after the festival is over Siegfried is permitted to see her.

Presently rumors come from over the Rhine of a queen of matchless beauty, who stakes her love on her ability to win three games in succession from any suitor who might contend with her. Her character has not the gentle mildness of Kriemhilda's. She is bold and active, and loves contests of strength. She is even cruel, for any suitor who fails to win from her must forfeit his head. Gunther, however, is determined to win her, although all of his friends counsel him against the attempt. Then Siegfried

*Niebelungenlied, ll. 1597-1600.

replies to his request for help that it shall be done, if Gunther will give him the lovely Kriemhilda, his sister, as guerdon for his labor. Before, he has not been bold enough to ask for Kriemhilda, but now that he can earn her by aiding Gunther win a wife, he takes courage. The bargain is made,- Kriemhilda is not consulted at all--and they make preparations for the journey. Gunther enlists the services of his sister to make him fine embroidered garments. She calls her most skilled maidens to work with her; she, "herself the cloth did shear." Her sisterly devotion keeps her at the task even after she is weary of it.

When Brunhilda sees the approach of strangers she makes elaborate preparations for them.

"They decked themselves for sake of the visitors unknown,
As comely women ever since days of old have done.
Then to the narrow windows they quickly came again,
Whence they could see the heroes,- and gazed with might and main."*

Apparently the fair Brunhilda and her maidens were lacking neither in vanity nor in curiosity.

Siegfried is represented as the vassal of Gunther, a mistake in policy, as it developed later. He arranges for the games with Brunhilda and then slips back to the ship for his cap of darkness which will make him invisible. Brunhilda prepares for the games, putting on a skilfully woven silken armor which cannot be pierced, and taking up her shield which is so heavy that four of her chamberlains can scarcely carry it. Her spear, too, is so heavy that it requires three of her liegemen to uphold it. Her strength is a "fearsome thing", and entirely incongruous with her beauty.

* Nibelungenlied. ll. 1597-1600.

She flings her javelin so far that it is only through the help of the invisible and mighty Siegfried that Gunther wins. When Gunther has won in all the contests, "the beauteous Brunhilda all red with wrath became: for Siegfried had prevented King Gunther's death and shame."

Brunhilda is too honorable to take back her word, and tells her people that now they must acknowledge Gunther as their liege-lord. The Burgundians, not quite trusting her, fear treachery while she is entertaining them royally, and send Siegfried for the Nibelungs. Brunhilda is just, however, and makes preparations to leave with Gunther. She gives many gifts to the people but is vexed at the lavishness of her steward. They tell her that there is no need for her to save any of her treasure, for Gunther has gold enough for both. She persists in taking away twenty coffers of gold and silken stuffs for gifts in Burgundy. She does not want to be dependent upon her husband entirely.

Apprised by Siegfried of the success of Gunther's quest and of the approach of Brunhilda, Uté and Kriemhilda dress in their richest, most magnificent gowns to receive the new queen. They ride to the landing place to greet her as soon as she lands. Kriemhilda receives Brunhilda graciously, lovingly, lauding her beauty (though some say that Kriemhilda is the lovelier). There is no hint of the strife that is to come between them.

At the wedding feast, Siegfried reminds Gunther of his promise, and Kriemhilda is straightway called. Gunther tells her of his oath, asking that she fulfill his pledge. She dutifully consents, since her will is ever to do as he commands, never hinting that she is in love with Siegfried and wants to do what

her brother asks. Brunhilda cannot restrain her tears when she sees Kriemhilda given to Siegfried, with whom she has fallen in love; but she has guile enough to conceal the true cause of her grief, saying that it is because Gunther's sister should be married to his vassal. Gunther is too busy to undeceive her then.

Brunhilda is not entirely conquered by the victory of Gunther in the games. She is resolved to remain a maiden, and with her superior strength binds Gunther with her girdle. Only through the intervention of Siegfried again does Gunther win her for his wife. Indiscreetly Siegfried tells his wife of the matter and gives her Brunhilda's ring and girdle, which he has brought away with him.

After Siegfried has been in his home kingdom for some years, Brunhilda begins to fret that she and Gunther are receiving no service from their vassal. Pretending that she wishes to see Kriemhilda again, she coaxes Gunther to invite them for a festival. Of course, Siegfried and Kriemhilda accept gladly, for they wish to visit their kinsman again.

The two queens greet each other affectionately and go together to the festive games. It is Kriemhilda's pride in her husband that precipitates the rupture between them. As they sit watching the knightly feats, she says that she has a lord who rightly is the ruler of all the broad kingdom. Brunhilda declares that as long as Gunther lives that could never be. Then begins the quarrel. Each queen is positive that her husband is the bravest, the fairest, the most powerful king in the world. Brunhilda taunts Kriemhilda with Siegfried's confession of his vassalage to Gunther. The queen of Netherlands declares that she will prove

in the court that she owes no fealty to any one. She dresses herself and her attendants in magnificent clothing.

"Such costumes as the daughter of noble knights might wear,
Compared with what her maids wore was common as the air;
In gear she was so wealthy, that thirty queens had shown
No such display of raiment as this fair queen alone."*

At the minster door she essays to pass before Brunhilda, who bids her stay. "Before the queen a vassal shall ne'er take right of way!" At once Kriemhilda mocks her with what Siegfried has told her of Brunhilda's bridal night, and upon a demand for proof, displays the ring and girdle which Siegfried has given into her keeping. Brunhilda is dismayed, first accusing the queen of having stolen the ring, and then sending for Gunther to disprove the statement. Siegfried is called, and finding the ladies weeping, demands an explanation; when it is given him, he reproaches his wife with having exceeded the truth.

"So should one train one's women, the hero ~~of~~ Siegfried said,
'That such like haughty speeches should aye be left unsaid;
Unto thy wife forbid them, to mine I'll do the same;
Such ill-advised behavior doth fill my heart with shame.'"**

Still Brunhilda is not appeased and still she holds the matter sore at heart. She tells Hagen, Gunther's friend, of it, and he swears to make Kriemhilda's husband repent for her lie. All the love that Brunhilda once had for Siegfried seems to have disappeared, and she plots with Hagen to secure her revenge, Her hatred for Kriemhilda is now intense, and nothing is too much for her punishment. The old fierce nature which was hers in the days

* Nibelungenlied. ll. 3341-3344.
**Nibelungenlied. ll. 3442-2448.

of her maidenhood has returned. Through Kriemhilda's solicitude for her husband, Hagen persuades her to betray to him Siegfried's one vulnerable spot in order that he may watch to see that no blow ever strikes there. Kriemhilda, in her innocence and guilelessness, even sews a little cross on his garment over the spot. Thus through treachery the mighty Siegfried lost his life.

When Kriemhilda finds Siegfried at her door where his murderers have laid him, the room is filled with her wailing. She divines that his death has come through Hagen, from her betrayal of Siegfried's secret. She is all remorse and grief. She resolves to avenge his death, waiting till a more convenient time. Brunhilda "still arrogantly sat", and takes not a thought of Kriemhilda's grief, excepting to rejoice that she is avenged. For four years and more Kriemhilda grieves for Siegfried, staying close by the spot where he lies buried. For several years more she mourns, never being able to forget the warrior dead.

At last Etzel, the heathen king of the Huns, comes seeking her as a bride. This marks a change in the story; Brunhilda drops out, and Kriemhilda's character changes. She becomes much more primitive, and loses all her gentleness; she is occupied only with her passion for revenge against her brothers and Hagen for Siegfried's death. Her bitter relentless hatred toward them is made the moving spring of the final tragedy.* Kriemhilda is not at all anxious to marry Etzel, but after much persuasion on the part of her brothers, she consents, and goes back to the Huns' land with him. There she is welcomed with gifts and kind wishes, and made to feel at home. She regrets very much that she has been despoiled of the Nibelung gold, and she is not able

* Ludlow, Popular Epics of the Middle Ages, Vol. 1, p. 107.

to give as fine presents as she would wish.

For many years she lives happily with Etzel, studying to learn the virtues of Helka, Etzel's first wife, and please her husband with them. But always she remembers Siegfried and desires to be revenged. Finally she thinks of a plan whereby her revenge will be complete. She asks Etzel to send an envoy to the Burgundian country, inviting the three brothers of Kriemhilda and their chivalry to visit the Huns. Gunther believes that she has forgiven them all, except Hagen perhaps, and resolves to accept the invitation. Hagen counsels him against it, for "long-waiting in her vengeance is she, King Etzel's wife." Nevertheless they make preparations to go. Even against prophecies of misfortune they continue their journey, once they have started.

In Hunland, Queen Kriemhilda greets the Nibelungs "with feigned courtesy", and kisses her youngest brother, whereat Hagen laces his helmet's band tighter. Soon Kriemhilda begs one of her lords to avenge her now on Hagen. He hesitates, both because he dislikes attacking a guest, and because he is not sure of his ability to defeat Hagen. The Burgundians keep such careful watch that there is no opportunity to surprise them with treachery. In the end Kriemhilda arms a mighty force, which attacks her guests, and a bloody battle ensues. The Burgundians will not yield Hagen for punsihment, and the battle continues. Kriemhilda, fierce and merciless, mingles in the battle urging on her men to kill Hagen. She even cruelly orders the hall set on fire to force them to yield. No pity will she show, nor mercy. The last few men yield, Dietrich, Gunther, Hagen. She separates them from each other and orders them killed. She thinks of nothing but her vengeance. She pro-

mises Hagen his life if he will yield her the treasure of the Nibelungs. With her own hand holding Siegfried's sword, she smites off his head, and then is killed by Hagen's man --but she is avenged!

In the latter part of the Nibelungenlied, woman is not pictured in her most pleasing colors, it is true. But in the first part Kriemhilda is very charming. The Nibelungenlied is interesting as giving a definite characterization of the two important women,- Kriemhilda and Brunhilda. There are several amusing characteristics of woman as a class displayed in the story; the love of dress and display, curiosity and jealousy.

There are variations in the story of the Nibelungs in the other versions. In the Edda, Sigurd rescues Brunhild from the enchanted castle, and leaves her with the promise to return and take her away as his wife. In the country of the Nibelungs he meets Gudruna who becomes enamoured of him; through a magic potion given by Gudruna's mother, Sigurd forgets Brunhild and marries Gudruna. Brunhild, wooed and won by Gunar, still loves Sigurd and plans to punish him for his desertion. Her remorse causes her to kill herself at his funeral pile. Gudruna appears later in the story as the wife of Attila, whom she slays at a feast because of her brother's murder. She turns against her husband for the sake of her brothers and fights by her brothers' side. The women in the Edda are of the same fierce primitive type to which the Kriemhilda of the latter part of the Nibelungenlied belongs. The underlying motive of their actions is revenge. They are strong, impetuous, and warlike.

It is the same in the tales of Gudruna, which tell the same

story with variations. Gudruna in her grief for her husband's death thinks always of revenge.

"There was a time when Gudrun was ready to die--when sorrowful she sat by Sigurd. She gave forth no groans, nor tossed her hands, nor wept like other women. Noble earls came to visit her, but she could not weep; she was so shaken with grief that she almost burst.---So sad was she after her husband's death, and burning with rage of heart because of the king's murder."

There is another story in which the woman is very like Kriemhilda. There is only a fragment of it in English, but the whole story is preserved in Latin of the eighth or ninth century - Walter of Acquitaine. Attila, king of the Huns invades the territory of the Franks, the Burgundians, and the Quitanians, receiving Hagen, Hildegund, the only daughter of the Burgundian king, and Walter, affianced to Hildegund, as hostages from the various countries. Attila brings the hostages up as if they were his own children. Hildegund rises rapidly in the favor of the queen, whom she pleased by her noble manners and by her industry in her domestic duties, until she is at length made keeper of the royal treasure and her influence is almost equal to that of the queen herself. The queen wishes Walter to marry a Hunnish maiden, but he refuses because of his betrothal to Hildegund. The two plan to escape in the night with some of the treasure. When the Huns awake from sleep and miss Walter, the king offers enormous gifts to any one who will bring him back. Gunthar, king of the Franks, learns that it is his treasure which he paid as tribute to Attila that the two are carrying away, and goes with Hagen to recapture it. They find Walter in a cave where he has been resting. Thanks

to his great strength and his advantageous position, Walthar kills all but Hagen and Gunthar, who realize that they cannot capture him in his stronghold and resolve to entice him out by trickery. In the morning Walthar and Hildegund leave because they think the two have departed. Hildegund is ever on the alert, however, and soon spies the two following them. Walthar is afraid of defeat, but Hildegund spurs him on to battle with both taunts and praise. Her war-loving nature asserts itself strongly. They find that Walthar is a match for both, and yield. Then Hildegund performs her womanly duties of bandaging and treating their wounds and serving them with wine. Afterwards they go on their way. Hildegund and Walthar are married, and rule in Acquitaine for thirty years, well loved by all. Hildegund is a heroic figure, full of force and bravery, even in the small fragment of the story that we have.

3. THE CHANSON DE GESTE.*

THE SONG OF ROLAND

Woman has very little place in the Song of Roland. The only two who have any part at all in the story are Aude, to whom Roland is betrothed, and Bramimonde the wife of Marsile, the heathen king. The relation of Roland with Aude is referred to only in passing, and plays no part in the action of the poem. There is no other suggestion of the relation of lovers than this brief mention. When Charlemagne returns with the word of Roland's death, Aude comes to him to ask for news of her lover. Charlemagne

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* The Chanson de geste is often considered as a romance, but it has epic features, and it seems more fitting to class it with the epic in this discussion, because the women of the Chanson resemble the women of the epic far more than they do those of the romance.

tells her that she asks of one who is dead. At first Aude is stunned, and does not speak. When Charlemagne offers her the hand of his son, the Prince Louis, to console her for the loss of Roland, she is frankly astonished that any one could believe that after having lost Roland she is able to love more. Speaking thus she falls at Charlemagne's feet dead. It is a pathetic picture that we have of Aude, a gentle, loving girl, so devoted to her lover that she can not live when he is dead; but it is only a glimpse. It reveals little of woman's position at that time.

Bramimonde takes a more active part in the story. She is represented as a loyal and loving wife, overcome with grief at Marsile's defeat and death. During the siege of their castle she watches the battle from the tower, seeing her husband killed. She breaks into impotent rage, and upbraids the invaders for his death. After Marsile is dead, her position is important, for she surrenders to Charlemagne Saragossa and its sixty towers. Most of the heathen prisoners are forced to be baptized, but Bramimonde is led a prisoner to France that she may be converted "by love". We cannot get a very full view of her character, for there is no glimpse of daily life like scenes in Heorot and in the halls of the castles of the Nibelungenlied to exhibit her dignity and her caprices.

We see the women of the Song of Roland only at times of great crisis. Only the high points of their character are touched. Still there is something charming about Aude, and something winning about the heathen queen Bramimonde.

Raoul de Cambrai

In none of the Charlemagne stories does woman assume much im-

portance. In Raoul de Cambrai there is one rather charming girl, the daughter of noble Gerin. She falls in love with Bernier, who is beneath her in rank, and goes to her father for consent to marry him. The scene between the two is amusing.

"My daughter" he says, "I love nothing in the world as much as you."

"That is what we shall see", she replies. "My father, I come to ask you to marry me."

"What!" exclaims Gerin: "is there anything changeable like the minds of women? Did you not only a week ago, refuse the marriage which was offered you?"

"Because", she says, "They were not to my liking: but now I want to take a husband."

"Never", says Gerin, "has a young girl talked in that manner. A husband is not a thing which you can buy in fair or market. Let one come who is to your liking. and whoever he may be, be he but a poor palmer from beyond the sea, I will give him to you."

"That's fair speaking, my father; but give me the handsome and brave Bernier."

Gerin consents and the marriage follows. A rebuke which Raoul gives to his mother when she tries to keep from waging unjust warfare indicates the position women were supposed to keep in the household.

"Go into your chamber to take your own ease, drink a draught to fatten your paunches, and occupy yourself with thoughts of eating and drinking, for it is no business of yours to interfere in anything else."

Huon de Bordeaux

Huon of Bordeaux is sent on three quests by Charlemagne to prove his innocence of treason against his king. One of these quests is to find the Sultan's daughter Clarimonda and kiss her three times upon the lips. This act gets him into trouble at court, and he is cast into prison. The princess kind-heartedly feeds him during his imprisonment, and helps him to escape. Then with his quests all fulfilled, Huon returns to Charlemagne, after having married the princess in Rome. Clarimonda does not have a very distinct characterization, and her position is not very important and yet the robbing of three kisses from her does bring on a battle. This story savors very much of romance.

William of Orange.

The subcycle of the Charlemagne stories concerning William of Orange has one of the most charming of the Saracen women, Orable, who becomes the wife of William of Orange. She lacks the refinement of the lady of romance, is primitive, and inclined to be forward. She is the queen of Tybalt, the pagan monarch of Orange. William goes to Orange in the guise of a pilgrim to discover the force of the king. When he asks to see the ladies, he is conducted to the tower of Glorietta, where he finds Orable seated, dressed in scarlet cloth, fanned by the lady Rosiana with a silver fan: "whiter was she than the shining snow, redder than the rose." William is recognized by one of the returned Saracens, and saves himself only through the arms which Orable finds for him. Later he is captured, when the Saracens come to the tower through a secret passage, and is condemned to be burned. Orable saves the captives by begging them as her prisoners to be devoured by snakes.

Her husband tells her it is her fault that the Christians have caused this bloodshed, since she armed them; she replies with insults and threatens to strike him. Orable goes to the dungeon in which William and his companions are imprisoned, offering to deliver them if William will marry her. A messenger gets through by a second secret passage, and they are rescued. Afterwards Orable is baptized under the name of Guiborc and is married to William.

In a time of stress, William goes to his sister Blanchflower for help. Since she is busy, she refuses to bother with his request. His mother proffers her aid, for though her hair is white, she has a"bold and fighting heart." William is so angry with his sister that he almost beheads her. His anger is cooled when his niece Alice, a courteous damsel, whiter than a fairy, throws herself at his feet to beg reconciliation for her mother. She is so determined to win his forgiveness that she declares that she would rather be burned alive than rise till he has granted reconciliation and forgiveness. Alice has too much the air of a martyred saint to be very real or interesting.

Orable shows the courage of a true epic hero when the occasion demands. After the battle of Aliscans, William returns alone to his castle, disheartendd. Orable does not recognize him because he is in the armor of a dead Saracen, and is hardly convinced even when he unhelms, because she thinks William would not have left his companions. She recalls his courage to him, through her own invincible courage, and he returns to the battle. To make the Saracens believe that Orange is well garrisoned, she dresses in armor, and defends her castle against the enemy.

Perhaps timid at heart, she makes a brave showing of courage for her husband's sake.

When William returns again, his sons dead, Orange despoiled, he laments bitterly over his fate. Guiborc reproaches him gently. "Full glad should a man be who has a good wife; and if he is good, he will love her right heartily." She urges him not to despair, but to rebuild Orange.

Orable's strength of character compensates for the rather primitive nature of her impulses. She was not true to her Saracen husband, but she was undyingly loyal to William, her Christian husband. We see her in all phases of her life, from the luxurious domestic ease to the brave defense of her husband's castle.

II WOMAN IN ROMANCE.

1. Early English Romances.

King Horn.

In King Horn, the oldest English romance, the chief woman is Rymenhild, a striking figure. She is individual in some respects, yet typical of a class, with primitive, undisciplined nature, passionate and faithful. She meets Horn, whom her father King Ailmar has rescued, and falls so much in love with him that she grows nigh mad. When she can endure her grief no longer she sends word to her steward Athelbrus to bring Horn to her. Athelbrus fearing harm for Horn, brings Athulf, the friend of Horn, instead. Rymenhild is not at all restrained in her wooing-- when Adulf enters her bower she takes him in her arms and avows her love. When she finds that Athelbrus has deceived her, she is as unrestrained in her rage, demanding that Horn himself come to her. Although Horn is pleased with her love, he tells her that it is not fitting for him, her father's thrall, to marry her. She swoons and he is so grieved that he promises to marry her if he can win knighthood. Not to be balked in her desire, Rymenhild secures his knighting through her father, and claims the fulfillment of the promise. Horn, however, declares that he must prove himself worthy of knighthood and her before wedding her. She gives him a ring, and he goes away to seek his fortune. He returns soon having killed many Saracens, only to be betrayed to the king, who believe that Horn is plotting against his life. Horn is driven from the court, promising to be true to Rymenhild and to return for her in seven years. She is entrusted to the care of Athulf, who is as a brother to Horn.

After many adventures, Horn comes to the kingdom of King Thurston and renders him aid in battle. For his services to the king, Horn is offered the daughter Reynild in marriage; thinking of Rymenhild, he cannot accept. But for six years he dwells there sending no word to Rymenhild, who is now about to be forced into a marriage with King Modi of Reynes, an enemy of Horn's. She, still faithful to her lover, when it would be much easier to be faithless, sends a messenger to seek out Horn. After the messenger has found him, Horn tells King Thurston all about himself, and asks his help in winning Rymenhild, promising that Reynild shall marry Athulf. On the very eve of the bridal, Horn returns disguised as a palmer, makes his identity known to Rymenhild by means of her ring, and rescues her from the marriage. Before taking her as his wife, he is determined to win back his own kingdom of Suddene, never fearing further treachery. He is recalled again to save Rymenhild from another hateful marriage. This time he takes her away with him, and they live happily in Suddene for many years.

Rymenhild is a wilful, passionate creature of uncontrolled impulses, yet constant in love.* She watches and watches for Horn to return, and when she thinks him lost forever she is ready to destroy herself. She is full of action, and it is by her actions that she is interesting.

Havelok the Dane

Goldborough has small part in the story of Havelok the Dane, but she is interesting nevertheless. She is "the loveliest of

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*Creek, H.L., Character in the "Matter of England" Romances.

women, and wise in all good ways." We find her deprived of her heritage by the Earl Godrich, imprisoned in a castle and clothed in a sorry fashion. Then we find her forced into a marriage with Havelok who appears as a lowly fisherman. Goldborough, the great lady, resents this marriage with one apparently far her inferior, but submits perforce. Apprised by a dream of her husband's rank, she urges him to seek his kingdom without delay. She is a figure of strength, but seems to have little personality. The absence of the love element perhaps prevents the development of her character to some extent. Goldborough is only a queen.

Two other girls appear in the story, the two daughters of Grim, who rescued Horn and raised him. They are given no personality at all, and are interesting only as instances of the maidens who are given in marriage as a reward for faithful service on the part of followers or retainers.

Bevis of Hampton

Josyan in Bevis of Hampton is of the same type as Rymenhild, though not quite so attractive as Rymenhild. The description of her beauty is striking because of the strange comparisons used. The heroines of the epics are not described in any such detail.

"He (King Ermyn) had a daughter of young age,
Josyan that maiden hete;*
The shoon were gold upon her feet,
So white she was and fair of mood,
So is the snow on red blood,
Whereto should I that maid descrive?
She was the fairest thing on-live,

* was called.

She was so hend and so well y-taught;

But of christian law ne couth she nought.*

Bevie comes to the court of the heathen king Ermyn, because his mother has sought his death, and sent him to the port to be sold as a slave to the captain of any ship which happened to be sailing for Heathenesse. The mother of Bevis is of a cruel, primitive type. She has been forced into a distasteful marriage with Sir Guy, the father of Bevis. She hated her husband and sought his confidence only to destroy him. Using illness as a pretense she sent her husband into the forest to hunt some special game for her, and there her lover Sir Mardour killed him, sending her the head "as the stipulated price of her affection." Next she ferociously demanded the murder of her child as the first proof of his uncle's allegiance. The uncle only pretended to kill him,and thus it was that Bevis comes to the heathen land.

At the court of Ermyn, Bevis gets into trouble by killing one of the knights of the Saracen king, who proposes to put him to death at once. Only through the intercession of Josyan, who interviews the young knight, Bevis is saved. When Josyan finds that Bevis is wounded, she assures him that she is a leech with the best, and cures his wounds as proof of her statement. Ermyn is brought to forgive him and accept his services. Bradmond, king of Damascus, asks the hand of the fair Josyan, declaring that he will ravish the land if he is refused. An army is collected, and Bevis is made knight, at Josyan's suggestion, so that he will have greater advantage against the foe. Of course he does many

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* Bevis of Hampton (Ellis) 11, 519-527.

deeds of valor in battle, which pleases the king so much that on the return he orders his daughter to disarm the hero and clothe him in a magnificent robe and serve him while at table.

Then is Josyan right glad: she does not hesitate to tell Bevis that she loves him, When he tells her that he is only a knight and too poor to marry her, she gets very angry at his refusal and reproaches him. After he is gone, she laments the injured pride which kept her from trying to detain him. She sends after him begging him to return. He refuses; she goes to him and begs his forgiveness, promising to become a Christian for his sake. Her persistence wins him in the end. Soon after, jealous knights at the court plot against Bevis, sending him to Bradmond, who imprisons him in a dungeon. Then Josyan is told that he has returned to England, and is there married to a lady of high rank. Josyan is forced to marry Inor, king of Mounbrannt, when Bevis escapes from the dungeon after seven years imprisonment, goes to Inor's court and elopes with her to Cologne, where she is christened.

Bevis leaves Josyan at Cologne while he goes to Hampton to revenge himself upon his mother and her husband. During his absence Sir Mile becomes enamoured of Josyan. Since she cannot escape it she marries him, and then murders him the very first day. She is saved from being burnt at the stake by Bevis, who returns just in time. At last they are married, but their troubles do not end. Bevis is banished, Josyan is lost from him and they are not reunited for seven long years, From that time on they have a fairly peaceful life.

Josyan is interesting. She has a strong will and a great

deal of persistence. It is through this persistence and her willingness to change her faith that she wins Sir Bevis. Her courage is great enough to give her strength to slay her undesired husband. She is a strong woman, equal to emergencies, faithful to her lover and husband. She loves passionately, and is rather forward, of the type which usually represents the Saracen girl.

Guy of Warwick.

In Guy of Warwick woman is more important. She is of the courtly type; the hero falls in love, the woman is proud, haughty, disdainful, the typical lady of the romance of chivalry. Felice the daughter of Rohand, one of the most powerful nobles in England, is very beautiful and learned. Her accomplishments are as remarkable as her beauty. She is proficient in the art of medicine, an attainment absolutely necessary to all ladies in the times of chivalry.

Guy, the son of Segard, steward of the Earl of Warwick is the cupbearer of Felice. Charmed by her perfection he falls in love with her but to be repulsed by the wealthy heiress. He falls ill of a malady which no physicians seem able to diagnose or cure. Felice dreams that she should return the page's affection; at the same time Guy endeavors to make one last plea for mercy. The maid pleads his case with Felice, for he seems to her a young man well worthy of love. Felice eventually gives him a favorable answer, and he begins to recover at once. Afterwards she is cold and haughty to him again, even after he is made knight, telling him that that is no sign of merit, and that before he could claim the fulfillment of her promise he must acheive something to make him worthy of her affection. To win her, Guy goes into the world

to do noble deeds, while he is away from Felice he almost forgets her, and is on the point of marrying Loret, an emperor's daughter, given him for his services.

"The wedding ring was brought forth,
Guy then on fair Felice thought,
He had her nigh forgotten clean!
'Alas!' be said, 'Felice the sheen!' *
And thought in his heart anon,
'Against thee now have I misdone! '
Guy said, 'Penance I crave:
None other maid my love shall have! '"

So Guy renounces the marriage sacrificing to the original object of his passion the possession of a younger and more beautiful woman, together with the richest empire in the universe. What of Loret we do not know. That she should be sacrificed to Felice seems the natural thing to the author, and yet Felice was a haughty, reserved creature, while Loret was much more lovable. At any rate, Guy deserts her at the very last minute and goes back to Felice, despite the entreaties of Loret and her father.

Felice has had time for reflection during the long absence of her lover, and finally accepts him. They do not live happily ever after, however, for forty days after the marriage, Guy repents of having slaughtered so many valiant knights.

"And all was for woman's love,
And not for God's sake above."

Deeply penitent, he resolves to go on a pilgrimage to win forgiveness for his sins. At first Felice is disposed to put an end

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* bright, beautiful.

to her life for having been the cause of it all. She resolves, however, to spend her life in penance too. During the long interval of Guy's absence Felice passes her life in acts of devotion and of charity. Guy goes home in pilgrim's weeds, unrecognized. Not wishing to disturb her pious religious rites, he leaves again. When he is about to die he sends a page to Felice with his ring adjuring her to come and give directions for his burial. She finds him dying, and is not able to survive him more than fifteen days.

In love, Felice is as reserved and cruel as Rymenhild is unrestrained and generous. She promises her love repeatedly, only to withdraw it until Guy has become the most famous knight in the world. After marriage, her conduct shows a marked change , for she becomes a mild and dutiful wife, feeding the poor and praying for her absent husband, so that there is no better woman in the world. Felice is more cultivated, more self-contained, more of a"lady " than the ladies in the earlier romance, and much more so than the ladies of the epic. She is selfish to an extreme degree, demanding all and giving nothing. Her haughty pride and reserve are typical of the lady of the courtly love ideal.

2. The Lai of Marie de France.

The lai, the intermediary between Celtic folk-lore, and French romance, is at its best in Marie de France, of the twelfth century. The woman of the lai begins to take on the characteristics that belong to the woman of the real romance. Most of the lais has elements of magic which reflect the folk-lore.

In Guingamor, the queen "tall and fair and graceful," falls in love with Guingamor. He refuses to accept her love because it

is disloyal to the king. The queen, afraid that the knight will betray her to the king, plans to get rid of him. At dinner, "the queen watches him, and thinking to make him wrathful, she devises words of which each one shall weigh heavily." She taunts him with not going into the forest to hunt the white boar, because she knows no one ever returns from the quest. Of course, Guingamor asks the king for the privilege of going, when the king hesitates, "with that comes the queen, who has heard what Guingamor desires (and know ye that it pleases her well) and she prays the king that he will do as the knight requires, for she thinks thus to be delivered from him, and never in all her life to see him again."*

In the forest Guingamor is enchanted by a beautiful maiden ("in all the world was there nothing so fair, neither lily nor rose"), who promises him the white boar if he will stay with her for three days. After three days he asks to depart, and the maiden tells him that he has been there three hundred years, so that the king and all his subjects are dead, and the land despoiled. Guingamor wishes to see for himself, and returns with the warning to eat nor drink nothing while in his own land. Forgetting he becomes old and weak. The maidens take him back across the river in their boat, and nothing is ever heard of him again.

The queen is typical of a class which is very common in the romances--the unfaithful queen making advances to one of the knights, and seeking revenge when repulsed. She is not a pleasant type, however common.

Sir Launfal is another story of the other world. While hunting one day, Launfal rests and falls asleep beside a stream.

* Lais of Marie de France - p. 13

Awakened by two maidens he is led to their mistress, a maiden "of beauty surpassing that of the lily and the new-blown rose, when they flower in the fair summer tide,---and face and throat and neck were whiter than flower of the thorn."* Launfal wins her love on the condition that he tell none of his adventure, for then he will lose her forever. She promises that whenever he shall wish her with him she will come. One day when Launfal is jousting before the window, the queen notices him and falls in love with him. Because of loyalty to Arthur and to his lady, he will have nothing to do with her. To save his honor, he must tell her that he already loves another, boasting of the beauty, wisdom, and goodness of his loved one. The queen goes away weeping that Launfal should thus have insulted her. In her anger she tells Arthur untruths about Launfal, so that the latter is disgraced and will be dismissed from court if he cannot bring his lady on a certain day to prove that he really loves a fairer lady than the queen. Launfal is in despair, particularly because by revealing his love he has lost his lady. The day comes, and sentence is about to be pronounced when word comes of a beautiful maiden who is approaching.

"In all the world was none so fair---And thus was the lady clad; her raiment was all of white, laced on either side. Slender was her shape, and her neck whiter than snow on the bow. Her eyes were blue, her skin fair. Straight was her nose and lovely her mouth. Her eyebrows were brown, her forehead white, and her hair fair and curling. Her mantle was of purple, and the skirts were folded about her, on her hand she bare a hawk, and a hound

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*Jessie Weston--Four Lais of Marie de France, p. 34.

followed behind her."*

Since there is no question that the maiden is fairer than the queen, Launfal is absolved from guilt . The maiden had not forgiven him, however, for breaking his promise and revealing his love. She does not forgive until they cross the river into the fair land of Avalon. Then she takes Launfal with her, and he never returns.

The description of the maiden is the standard one for the maiden of the romance. She is always the fairest being in the world, with wonderful eyes, hair and complexion. The necessity for concealing love is one of the rules of the court of love, and it was the natural consequence that Launfal should lose his love if he spoke of it.

The Were-Wolf has a different type of woman. A good knight of Brittany is wedded to a fair and gracious lady whom he loved tenderly, and she too loved her lord, but one thing vexes her sorely- three days in every week will her husband leave her, and none know whither he goes, or what he does while thus absent. Her curiosity at length overcomes her and she entreats him to tell her but he replies that evil will come of his telling it. She is ill-pleased, nor will she let her lord be at peace, but day by day she beseeches him with prayers and caresses till at length he yields and tells her all the truth. A spell is upon him so that three days of every week he is forced to become a were-wolf, and wander in the forest. She asks him what becomes of his garments while he is a wolf, and he answers that he hides them carefully, for if they were taken from him he would have to remain a wolf all his days. She is not satisfied till she knows even that,

* Jessie Weston--Four Lais of Marie de France. p. 48.

"Oh my dear lord", she says, "why hide it from me? Surely thou hast no fear of me who love thee above all else in the world? Little love canst thou have for me! What have I done? What sine have I committed that thou should'st withdraw thy confidence? Thou wilt do well to tell me."*

Thus she weeps and entreats till at length the knight yields and tells her all. As her husband has feared, the knowledge that he is a were-wolf part of the week changes her love to loathing, dread, and fear of him. After she has meditated upon it awhile, she remembers a certain knight who loved her before her marriage. She tells him of her husband's condition, and enlists his aid in stealing his garments so that she will be rid of her husband forever. The knight does as she asks him and her husband does not come home at the end of the week. The lady pretended to be very much worried, and sents messengers to search the wood. After a year she marries the knight who has aided her and thinks no more of the husband she has betrayed. Eventually the lady and her second husband are found out and confess, while the first husband regains his former shape.

This story resembles the fabliau with its obvious moral. It was the lady's curiosity which got her into trouble. At first she was a loving, dutiful wife, under the same conditions which she could not abide when she knew them. It was a case of what one does not know does not hurt one. The change in her character is marked. She shows herself scheming, crafty, deceitful, and cruel, after she has found out her husband's secret.

In Eliduc we have a woman of fine quality, quite in contrast

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* Jessie Weston. Four Lais of Marie de France, p. 85.

with the one in the preceding story. Eliduc has been banished from his country. He leaves his wife, Guildeluc, with friends, promising to be true to her. He proves of service to a foreign king, and remains at his court, where the daughter Guilliadun falls in love with him. For a long time he repulses her because he remembers his promise of fidelity to his wife, but at last he makes her his mistress, and lets her believe that he will marry her. After his term of service is finished he plans to return home. Guilliadun, unconscious of the fact that he is already married, begs him to stay, threatening to destroy herself if he does not. Only by promising to return to her is he able to get away. It is not till he has her on board ship that she accidentally discovers that Eliduc has a wife. Then she swoons and dies. Eliduc is full of grief, and upon landing places her in a little chapel whither he goes every day to mourn for her death. Guildeluc perceives that something is bothering her husband, follows him, and finds the dead maiden. She is much impressed by the beauty of Guilliadun, and brings her to life again with a little red flower she finds by accident. Feeling that Eliduc loves Guilliadun the better, Guildeluc, with heroic self-sacrifice, enters a nunnery in order that Eliduc may marry Guilliadun.

The character of Guildeluc is truly noble. She reaches a height of sacrifice which few of the mediaeval heroines reach. Guilliadun is a rather common type of impetuous young beauty, but Guildeluc is a real woman, capable of feeling and of suffering.

In the Maiden of Ash there is another woman who reminds us of Guildeluc, though her story ends happily. The Maiden of Ash is found as a wee baby in the crotch of an ash tree, wrapped

in a splendid piece of silk. She is carefully reared by her preservers, becoming a wonderfully beautiful and sweet young girl. The duke falls in love with her, but cannot marry her because her birth is unknown. Because of her love for him she goes to live with him anyhow. She gains the love of all the courtly household and of all the subjects. But the people keep urging the duke to marry, because they want heirs to the dukedom; when he tells her his intention, she accepts her humiliation with great dignity, without a murmur of reproach, and shows herself so gracious and amiable to the new wife at the wedding feast that all marvel to see her. Her renunciation is not complete, however. In preparing the bridal bed she feels that it is not fine enough. Nothing in the house is quite so fine as the silk mantle in which she was wrapped as a child--the only thing she has by which to indentify herself. This she brings to throw over the marriage bed, thinking to honor the bride.

Again is virtue rewarded. The bride's mother coming to look at the bridal bed, discovers the silken covering. She demands whence it has come, and upon learning the story, confesses that the Maiden of Ash is her own daughter, a twin of the bride, whom she discarded at her birth for fear of shame coming upon her. Inasmuch as the Maiden of Ash proves of sufficiently noble birth for her lord to marry, the other bride is put aside, and the one the lord loves becomes his wife. She is re-established at court with increased honor and love, and receives the glad homage of his retainers.

The charm of the Ash Maiden's character gives charm to the whole story. We will remember her because she is not just the

same as the other ladies of romance, but has some distinguishing characteristics of her own.

3. Tristan and Iseult.*

Tristan and Iseult were two of the most famous lovers in the romance of the Middle ages. Their story is sad all the way through, for they are never able to show their love freely, without suspicion and with honor. Perhaps the saddest part comes at the very end of the story, when King Mark, after their death, says that if they had only told him that they loved, he would never have married Iseult, but would have united the lovers in the beginning.

The story begins sadly. Blanchefleur, Tristan's mother, falls in love with Rivalin, and runs away with him to his own land. There he is killed in battle after a few months of happiness. Blanchefleur cannot live long without him, and dies at the birth of Tristan, of a broken heart. Tristan, at the court of his uncle, King Mark, becomes a valiant warrior. In saving the kingdom from invasion, he is wounded by a poisonous sword, which is wielded by Morolt, whom he kills. Since none of the leeches of Cornwall can heal his wound, he determines to go to Ireland to the sister of Morolt, Queen Iseult, who is noted far for her wonderful power of healing. As he goes in disguise, Iseult heals him, never dreaming that he is the slayer of her brother, whom she should hate.

On his return to Cornwall, Tristan tells of the beauty of the Princess Iseult. "She is so fair a maiden that all that we hear of beauty is but an idle tale compared to her. No child nor maiden nor woman born was ever so fair to look upon. Erewhile I read that Aurora's daughter and her child fair Helen, were the

* The version used is a translation by Jessie L. Weston of Gottfried von Strassburg's Tristan and Iseult, 1210.

fairest of all women, that in them was gathered all beauty, as in a flower. Such a tale do I believe no longer. Iseult has robbed me of all faith of it. The sun of beauty dawned not in Greece, it hath risen in our own day, the hearts and eyes of all men turn to Ireland where the sun is born of the dawn,- Iseult, daughter of Iseult,-- Nor does her beauty lessen that of other women, rather through her fairness is all womankind honored, and in her fame all women are crowned."* Hearing of her marvelous beauty, the men of Cornwall seek to have King Mărk marry her. Tristan goes again to Ireland, this time as an envoy of King Mark, but under his old name Tantris. The princess notices that his sword is nicked and remembers the piece of sword found in her uncle Morolt's helmet. She fits the piece in the notch. She perceives also that Tantris is but Tristan reversed,and knows that she has found her uncle's slayer. She seizes the sword and is determined to avenge her uncle by killing his slayer, as he lies sleeping. Her mother, of a more forgiving spirit, prevents her, because she has pledged his safety as Tantris. Peace is made between them and Iseult is promised to Mărk in marriage.

On the way back to Cornwall, the next event in the tragedy occurs. Queen Iseult has sent a magic potion by Brangoene to give to mark and Iseult in order that they shall love and be happily married. By mistake one of the maidens gives it to Tristan and Iseult in place of wine. Immediately there is born within them the undying love which brings their death. Brangoene is filled with terror, but it is too late to make amends. The only thing the three can do is to keep the love of Tristan and Iseult a secret, and to allow the marriage of Mărk and Iseult

*Tristan and Iseult. pp. 77-78

~~a secret, and to allow the marriage of Mark and Iseult~~ to go on.

As time goes on, "King Mark, and all his folk, and the people of the land, loved and honored Queen Iseult, for the grace and the courtesy that they found in her, and no man but spoke her praises."* But Iseult is afraid that Brangoene will betray the relation between her and Tristan, and plots against her life. She sends her with two squires into the woods to be killed. Brangoene pleads so piteously for her life, saying that she has done nothing against the queen , that the squires pity her, and let her live. No sooner has Iseult given the order for Brangoene's death than she repents of it. When the squires return, she calls them wretched murderers and tells them that they shall be hung. She pretends that she has never given the order for Brangoene's murder, and weepingly asks if she is really dead. She is overjoyed to find that the squires disobeyed her first order and that Brangoene lives. Her caprices are those of a barbarous princess. The incident seems to seal the friendship of the two ladies anew, for they trust each other even to death. The noble character of Brangoene is brought out; in her trouble she was true to Iseult, even when the queen had turned against her, and her courage was steadfast, "even as gold tried in a furnace."

It is not long before people at court begin to suspect Tristan of loving Iseult. It is hard not to betray in some way love as deep as theirs. Mark trusts them both and does not listen for a long time to the accusations of the courtiers. It is only the cleverness of Iseult which keeps the two from discovery many times. Brangoene too uses her wits to keep the two from trouble, since

*Tristan and Iseult- Vol. II. p. 25.

it was her fault which caused the unfortunate situation. Time after time Mark's suspicions are laid at rest, only to be re-aroused by some careless act of the lovers. One time when the lovers have planned a meeting in the garden, Mark learns of it and goes to watch from the bough of a tree. Tristan sees the shadow on the grass, but too late to warn Iseult, She perceives from his attitude that something is wrong, and guesses that there are spies near. She changes her bearing from that of a yielding sweetheart to that of an insulted queen, reproaching Tristan for his temerity in asking her to meet him. Thus is Mark deceived again. Another time Iseult is forced to endure the ordeal by red-hot iron. By a ruse she makes her oath truthful but misleading, and comes through the ordeal unscathed.

The lovers judge it wiser for Tristan to go to another country, for his sojourn at Cornwall seems to be a constant source of trouble, They are very sad at the separation. In Wales, Tristan finds a little dog, a little fairy dog from the land of Avalon, named Petit-Criu. Around its neck is a little golden bell of such magic power that whenever it rings, sadness passes from all within hearing. He wins the dog as a gift, and sends it to queen Iseult, that it may bring her joy. Iseult receives the dog, hears the chimes of the fairy bell, and feels her sorrow and her longing for Tristan pass from her. But she thinks how Tristan is still weighed down with sorrow for her sake, and resolves that she will not be joyful while he is sad. Accordingly she breaks off the little bell, which then loses its magic power to bring peace to the heart of man. This is a wonderful bit of loving self-denial.

Presently Tristan returns to court, and then begins once more the round of suspicions aroused, lulled, and aroused again. Iseult seems to love Tristan the more as her husband forbids it--"For this is ever the way of women; children of mother Eve are they all."* Then the author expresses an opinion that Eve would never have sinned if the one tree had not been forbidden her. Because she could eat of every fruit save one, that one was the one she wanted. It was thus with Iseult: forbidden Tristan, she wanted him. At last Mark learns the truth. "So were Mark's doubts at an end--he suspected no more, for he knew."** Tristan knows that he must leave. He and Iseult exchange rings, and he bids her farewull, both promising eternal love, even though they be apart.

Tristan wanders far, at length coming to the land of Arundel. There he defeats the duke's foes and wins back his land for him. The duke's sister, Iseult of the white hand, a fair and noble maiden, beautiful and virtuous, brings back the old sorrow to his heart because she reminds him so strongly of his loved Iseult. And the more his heart yearns for the one Iseult, the more gladly he beholds the other. He finds himself wavering between two loves, but finally the old love conquers. However, the maiden Iseult has begun to love him. He desires but one Iseult, Iseult of Ireland; and Iseult of the white hand, she will have none but Tristan. As time passes, and no message comes from Queen Iseult, Tristan deems that she loves him no more and weds Iseult of the white hand.

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*Tristan and Iseult. Vol II. p. 126.

** Tristan and Iseult. Vol. II. p. 129.

In a battle for Iseult's brother, Tristan receives a deadly wound. No skill of the leeches of the land is potent to cure him. He feels that his only hope is to have Iseult of Ireland come to him. He send his ring to her beseeching her to come. That he may know the sooner of her coming he gives orders that the sails shall be white if she comes, but black if she comes not, "for I shall know she loveth me no more."* Iseult prepares in haste to go to Tristan as soon as she gets his message. Her unselfish readiness to go is touching. She has no thought of what the king may say, no thought of danger.

"But Iseult of the white hand had hearkened secretly when her husband spake to Kurwenal, and her heart was hot within her for anger "against the other Iseult, for she knew well who it was that Tristan loved. So when at last she spied the ship that bare Iseult the queen thither, she said to her husband: "yonder cometh the ship wherein Kurwenal sailed hence."

"What manner of sail doth it bear?" spake Tristan. "Tis black as night," answered Iseult of the white hand, yet she lied for the sail was white as snow." ** Then Tristan turns his face to the wall and dies, his last word a blessing upon Iseult, although he thinks she has failed him in his great need. It is in a land of mourning that Iseult of Ireland lands. She goes at once to the Minster where Tristan is laid, reproaches Iseult of the white hand, and sends her away. Silently she lies down by the bier, sighs once and dies. Her actions are impressive in their simplicity.

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* Tristan and Iseult. Vol. II p. 151.

** Tristan and Iseult. Vol II. p. 152.

Iseult is a woman of passionate and impulsive nature. She is clever and quick-witted. She is true in love, self-sacrificing, and tender. Her love for Tristan, wrong as it is, is the fault of the magic potion. She could not help it, the author makes us see clearly. We are to take her as she is, sweet and charming, unsullied by her wrongful relations with Tristan, which are caused by a love, which is beyond her power. She is to be remembered as a lover faithful to death.

Brangoene is a strong character, loyal to her mistress, and keen-witted. She tries her best to save the honor of the queen, and is very sad when her efforts prove fruitless in the end. She contrasts with Iseult of the white hands, who is treacherous and vengeful. Even though Iseult knows she will lose Tristan by her treachery, she prefers that, rather than that the other Iseult shall find him living. Our sympathies are always with Iseult of Ireland.

4. Miscellaneous Romances

There are many romances in English and in translations from the French, German, and Spanish, which belong to no particular cycle. They can be classified rather roughly into four groups. There is one group which seems rather closely allied to the fabliau because of the lesson each of the romances carries along with the story. This might be called the "moral" romance. A second group, the "other world" romance group, has part of the characters inhabitants of the other world, or deals with magic in some way. A third group is concerned with the love affairs of Saracen or paynim maidens and Christian knights, while the fourth group is that of the knightly or courtly romances. The women of the first are

noted chiefly for their virtues, of the second for their other-world loveliness, of the third for their passion, and of the fourth for their beauty.

The "Moral "Romances.

One of the most typical of the virtuous ladies of the "moral" romances is the fair wife of Sir Cleges in Sir Cleges. "A fair wife had that knight, never better was there in life, and passing merry of countenance, Dame Clarys was that lady hight; she was a good lady, assuredly, and ever of joyful mood; she gave alms right freely to the poor and cherished many; no man, rich or poor, bare ill-will towards them, for they ever did right."* Sir Cleges is so generous that he gives away all his land, and drops out from among the king's courtiers. Thus it happens that he is not asked to the great Christmas festival. As he stands and laments over his misfortune, his good wife draws near to him, and kissing him with gladsome cheer, comforts him.

"My lord", she says, "my true comrade, I heard your speech; ye see well that it helpeth naught to make moan, therefore, I pray ye cease and put away your sorrow, and thank God of His love for all that He hath sent - - - Think no longer of the griefs that beset ye.- - Be no more sad, but think on what I say. Go we to meat, forthwith, and let us be blithe and joyful as best we may; truly I hold this for best, for your meat is all ready, and I trust well to your liking."**

Sir Cleges follows his wife's advice, cheers up, and is re-instated in the king's favor on account of some ripe cherries which grow miraculously on the tree over Cleges's head as he thanks

* Jessie L. Weston, Sir Clege's and Sir Libeaus Desconus, pp. 3-4 (These are two old English metrical romances of the fifteenth century. **Jessie L. Weston. Sir Cleges & Sir Libeaus Desconus, pp. 6-7

God for what He has given. It is the wife's cheerful thankfulness which has brought the good fortune; she always looks on the bright side of things.

The wife of Sir Isumbras* is comparable with Dame Clarys. Though she and her husband are overwhelmed with misfortune, she is true to him. When she is carried away by the Soudan, who is struck by her beauty, she accepts her trouble as a manifestation of the divine will and makes no resistance. For many years she is separated from her husband; then he finds her a queen, a paragon of goodiness, loved by her people. She is true to him still, takes him in, beggar as he is, and makes him king.

Jehane, of King Florus and the Fair Jehane** is another noble and loyal wife. Jehane's mother is so anxious to have her married that at last her father gives her in marriage to his squire Robin, whom he makes a knight, While Robin is gone to the Holy land, for he has vowed that as soon as he is made a knight he will make a journey thither, Sir Raoul strives to win the love of Jehane. Sir Robin is forced to believe that Raoul has been successful and will not return home. Jehane, however, disguises herself, seeks out Robin, and becomes his squire, Robin is very poor--he must even sell his horse and armor. Jehane is faithful to him and strives to aid him. She tells him she once worked in a bakery, and together they establish a bake-shop at Marseilles. She works hard and long for her husband, who does not know her, She becomes worn and tired, but still she works. At length Sir Robin regains the land Sir Raoul has taken from him, Jehane rests for a while to recover her beauty, and discovers herself to him. Then they

*Early English metrical romance of the fifteenth century.
**Le Gallienne, Richard. Romances of Old France

live happily for years. After Robin's death Jehane is rewarded for her unceasing virtue by a marriage with King Florus.

Others of these romances make chastity the highest womanly virtue instead of faithfulness. The Wright's Chaste Wife* is one of these. When the Wright is married his mother-in-law gives him as a marriage portion a garland of roses which will keep its color as long as his wife is true, but change when she is faithless. To help her be true he builds a crafty room with a trap-door in the floor where she can capture any seducers. When his fellow workmen see the wreath, they determine to test it. One by one they go to the Wright's house. She captures them in the secret chamber, and will give them nothing to eat nor to drink unless they spin to earn it. She does not think they are punished sufficiently even then, for she sends for the lord's lady to see their disgrace before she will release them.

Dorigen, wife of Arviragus,** is a more charming representative of the same type. She is happily married and loves her husband dearly. While her husband is absent at war in England , she is importuned by a squire, Aurelius, to grant him her love. She cannot yield to him, nor can she get rid of him. At length she promises him her love on condition that he remove all the rocks from the Breton coast. With the aid of a magician he makes it seem that he has done as she asked, and claims his reward. She is dismayed, and does not know what to do. On the return of Arviragus, Dorigen confesses to her husband, who bids her keep her plighted troth. Though very sad to leave her husband, she

*Written by Adam of Cobsam, in the 15th century

**Chaucer. The Franklin's Tale .

obeys him, and goes to Aurelius. He is so much impressed by the magnanimity of Arviragus, and the highmindedness of his wife, that he sends Dorigen back to her husband.

An interesting insight into the attitude of the Middle Ages toward woman in The History of Over Sea* While Thibault and his wife are going on a journey to the Holy land, they are attacked by robbers, who bind Thibault and carry his wife away with them. When they finally set her free, she is so afraid that her husband will punish her for her involuntary fault that she tries to kill him. He graciously forgives her, however, though the author makes it clear that Thibault is doing something entirely out of the ordinary in granting his forgiveness.

A less pleasing and complimentary picture of woman is given in the Gray Palfrey.** She is made to appear more fickle, less steadfast. The girl in the Gray Palfrey is true to her lover in love, but she is changeable in her whims. The author comments, "at the slightest breath a woman may change and shift and vary; her heart seemeth a very weather cock, for oft it chances that in a little space her spirit changeth more quickly than the storm wind."

The Other World Romance

One of the most charming of these romances is Sir Orfeo*** which retells the story of Orpheus and Eurydice with a difference in setting. Sir Orfeo holds his court in Faciens, and with him

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* Le Gallienne, Romances of Old France

** Isabel Butler, Tales from the Old French.

***Weston, Chief Middle English Poets. p. 133.

reigns his queen so fair,

"Dame Heurodis, beyond compare,
The fairest lady, so I read,
That ever wore this mortal weed:
So full of love and gentleness
That none might tell her goodliness."*

One night Heurodis dreams that she will have to leave her husband.. Nothing is able to prevent her going, though she is "frantic in her pain," rends her hair and robe, and sheds "tears of wild despair." She is carried away to the land of the fairy king, the the other world, where she remains for many years. Orfeo is seeking for her all the time, and finds her at last. He wins her as a boon for his wonderful playing, and takes her back to his kingdom, where they live happily ever after.

Heurodis is not typical of the other world heroines, for she is merely a mortal carried away into the other world. She is a lovable queen and a loyal wife.

Many of the stories of the Mabinogion have these other-world women. In Math the Son of Mathonway a very charming lady is created by magic, because Llew Llaw Gyffs has been prevented by a curse from taking a wife of the mortal race. "So they took the blossoms of the oak, and the blossoms of the broom, and the blossoms of the meadow-sweet and produced from them a maiden, the fairest and most graceful that man ever saw. And they baptized her, and gave her the name of Blodeuwedd (Flower-face)!**

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* Sir Orfeo, Chief Middle English Poets. p. 133.

** Lady Guest's translation of the Mabinogion, p. 72.

Blodeuwedd seems to act much as any other lady would act, despite her origin. She lives, and entertains, and loves in no way peculiarly.

The story of Pwyll, Prince of Dyved, is full of magic. Pwyll exchanges kingdoms with a strange king whom he meets in the forest, going into the other world. There he finds the queen, "who was the fairest woman that he had ever yet beheld." She was dressed in a "yellow robe of shining satin, and walked with dignity. She was wise as well as beautiful, for Pwyll found her "the seemliest and most noble lady of converse and cheer that ever was."*

Rhiannon, the lady whom Pwyll marries, has very human characteristics even though she deals in magic. When Pwyll is wooing her she confesses that she loves him and will marry no one if he rejects her. At the feast preceding their nuptials, a stranger craves a boon of Pwyll, who grants him anything he shall ask. The stranger, who proves to be the lady's unwelcome suitor, demands the hand of Rhiannon is marriage. Rhiannon is disgusted with Pwyll's easy falling into the trap, and reproaches him heartily. "Never did man make worse use of his wits than thou hast done."** She uses her wits to extricate herself from her plight, and she and Pwyll are married. Several years afterwards Rhiannon is forced to submit to disgraceful tasks because her infant son is carried away by magic. She prefers doing penance to contending with the women who accuse her of destroying the child. For seven years Rhiannon, innocent though she is, carries out her penance with

*Lady Guest's translation of the Mabinogion. p. 6.

** Lady Guests translation of the Mabinogion. p. 14.

submissiveness. At last she is proven innocent by the return of her son by the lord who rescued him from the force of magic.

An interesting character is the dream-love of Maxen Wledig. For many successive nights Maxen dreams of a beautiful lady-"not more easy than to gaze upon the sun when brightest, was it to look upon her by reason of her beauty."* He falls in love with her, and determines to find if she is of this earth. He sends messengers to every land, with her descriptions, to seek for her. At length she is found in England, and the messengers ask her to go to Rome to the emperor. She haughtily refuses, demanding that the emperor come to her if he wishes her. When he comes, she marries him, but does not fail to ask a maiden portion, the Island of Britain for her father. She is always careful of her rights.

The Romance of the Saracen Maiden.

One of the earliest of these romances is Elias of Saint Giles.** Elias, a noble Christian knight, is carried grievously wounded to the town of Sarbric, where lives fair Rosemonde, a Saracenic princess. Like the rest of her sex in those times, Rosemonde is a good physician, and she takes Elias under her care. When he is well, she calls upon him to protect her against the invasion of one of her suitors. She will not accept any of her Saracen suitors because she is a Christian at heart, and this one has become angry at her refusal. Elias accepts the task, but coldly,

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* Lady Guest's translation of the Mabinogion, p. 85.

** Fourteenth Century.

as he has previously accepted her caresses. He defeats the Saracenic king, and returns to Rosemonde. Her brother Calfas accuses her of disgracing herself in seeking after the Christian knight, and she becomes furious, She seizes him by the hair and tears out part of it. When Calfas strikes her, she orders Elias to kill him. After a while Elias consents to marry Rosemonde, who is baptized, and they seek permission to be married. However, the marriage is forbidden by the emperor. Elias does not seem to care very much, but marries the emperor's sister. Rosemonde is not so easily consoled, and continues to refuse the offers of some of the highest barons of France.

Margery, in Richard Coeur de Lion* is very much like Rosemonde. When she finds Richard and his companions in prison, she pities them, and gives them food. She assists in their escape on the assurance that Richard will marry her. She is impetuous in character, and decisive in action. She is much more gentle than Rosemonde, and more tender-hearted. She is always trembling for her lover's safety, although she does not worry about her own. When Richard finally escapes, she remains true to him until his return. She intercedes with Richard for her father's sake to save him from invasion, even while she remembers that her father almost put Richard to death.

Nicolete, of Aucassin and Nicolete,**is another true-hearted girl. Her lover seeks her, though she is but a slave girl, and fights for her. Without the aid of Nicolete, Aucassin would never have won her. She is imprisoned in a high tower, but she,

*Weston, Chief Middle English Poets.

**Le Gallienne, Romances of Old France.

whole-hearted and indomitable in her love, escapes by a ladder of bedclothes, finds her lover, and flees to the forest. She is an example of adventurous, full-blooded girlhood.

There are many of these romances, but the heroine is about the same through them all. She loves the Christian knight who chances to come into her Saracen dominion, rescues him if he is in danger, and becomes a Christian for his sake. In Emperor Octavian, a Saracen maiden becomes a Christian for the sake of Florent. Blanchefleur of Floris and Blanchefleur, undergoes many hardships for the sake of her lover, remaining true to him always. In Ferumbras, Floripas tells the Christian prisoners of whom she is given charge that she wishes to marry Sir Guy, and become a Christian, "to which request Sir Guy agrees." The daughter of the king in "The Tale of King Coustans the Emperor* is a little cleverer than most of the Saracen girls, though she is of the same general type. She finds Coustans asleep in her garden, and falls in love with him. Prying into his belongings, she finds a letter addressed to her father, ordering the bearer's death. She substitutes for it an order for the bearer's marriage with her, and the trick is not discovered until the marriage has been solemnized.

The Saracen girl is not radically different from the Christian lady of romance. She feels the same, and acts the same, only more deeply and more impetuously. She is often rather bold in her advances toward the knight who is her prisoner, but she loves deeply and passionately. She is always willing to change her faith to win her lover. The Saracen girl is perhaps more real to us than any of the types which have preceded. She is more human,

*Le Gallienne, Romances of Old France.

it seems, than the stately lady of the epic, or the beautiful figures in the earlier romances. She is not cultured, but is free, and emotional.

The Courtly Romances.

Quite different is the lady of the courtly romance. True, she loves deeply and passionately, but she is restrained, cultured. It is the lover who must seek her, the knight who must make the advances. She is the lady of courtly love, who loves, but who loves in secret. She demands adoration and worship from her lover. Her lover keeps her image before him constantly, and can think of naught else. And no one must know that she loves or is loved.

One of the earliest of the courtly romances is the Chatelaine of Vergi. The story of the fair Chatelaine reminds us of the story of Sir Lanval. She has a lover who comes to her when her little pet dog running through the garden gives him the signal. The only restriction on her love is that he shall never tell of it, for then he shall lose it. He is placed in a position where he will either have to tell, and risk losing her if she finds out, or remain silent, and lose her by banishment from court. He chooses the former way, on the promise of the king never to divulge his secret. The king's wife coaxes him until he tells, and then the knight loses his sweetheart, because the queen taunts the Chatelaine with her love, and the girl dies of sorrow that her love should be made public.

Blonde of Oxford treats her lover Jehan very much as Felice treated Guy of Warwick. Jehan comes to England from France to

become the esquire of the Earl of Oxford. One of his duties is to wait upon Lady Blonde, with whom he falls so deeply in love that he forgets to carve. She reprimands him sharply, and looks upon him coldly. Like Guy he falls ill, and does not recover till Blonde has promised that he shall be her "bon ami". Even when she promises she thinks of him only as her carver, and not for a moment as a lover, so that his recovery brings him a bitter disappointment. He becomes ill again, so ill that Lady Blonde begins to pity him, and then to love him. The promise of her love brings him back to life. For two years they live happily as secret lovers, and then Jehan is called back to France. On his return they escape in the night, are married, and live happily ever after.

The unrequited emotion that Jehan felt for Blonde for so long a time is characteristic of the courtly romance. In the Romance of the Rose the youth loves the rosebud, but he cannot touch it; all he can do is to watch it and adore it. Even when love is returned, marriage does not often result. Sometimes the loved one is already married, and sometimes other circumstances prevent the marriage.

Although the relations of Troilus and Creseyde are essentially those of the court of love, there is one of the rules that Creseyde disbelieves. She calls Troilus' jealousy, which, according to the court of love is entirely natural,"swich folye", and takes Jove to task for allowing such an evil spirit to exist. Creseyde has the charm and sweetness of an exquisitely feminine figure. Yet she is deliberative and cool-headed. She is full of dignity, and conforms closely with the courtly conception of

the lady to be loved. According to the court of love, her fault is not in yielding to Troilus, but in being unfaithful to him. Yet Creseyde is not voluntarily unfaithful to her lover. She is driven to unfaithfulness by force of hard circumstances which she cannot control, she is true to Troilus until she meets Diomede, and she even resists the advances of Diomede for a long time. It is only when she finds him ill with wounds inflicted by Troilus that she begins to love him instead of Troilus.

Troilus wanted Creseyde badly, and his love for her was not an ideal passion like that of Petrarch for Laura, or an inspiration like that of Dante for Beatrice.

In Amadis de Gaul, Amadis gives to Oriana the complete devotion which is demanded of the courtly lover. He is faithful to her through everything. She loves him, but is deceived as to his constancy, and writes him such cruel letters that in the very height of his fame he renounces his friends and his arms to go to live in seclusion. He takes the name of the "Fair Forlorn", and lives apart, still devoted to Oriana. After years have passed, Amadis rescues Oriana from the suit of a lover favored by her father but not by her, finds that she loves him still, and carries her off to happiness on Firm Island.

The idea of courtly love is not confined to these romances. We find hints of it in the earlier romances, and the Arthurian stories have many suggestions of it. There is something charming about the lady of courtly love, wherever we find her, in romance, or in song of troubadour; she is always perfect in her attributes- how else could she be worshipped faithfully? She is dignified,

not at all like the impetuous Saracen girl; she demands love and receives it, but her love is not given too freely, for love that is too easily obtained is not worth keeping.

5. The Arthurian Romances.

The Arthurian romances constitute a large part of Middle Age romances, but since they are the best known of all the romances, I shall scant the space allotted to them. The lady of the Arthurian romance is not an entirely new type, for she is only a development from the lady of courtly romance. She has the same perfection of attributes, the same wonderful beauty, the same desire for whole-hearted devotion.

Guinevere is the most important and the most typical lady of the Arthurian romances, for her character is the most completely developed. In the Mabinogion, the material of which is at least as early as the eleventh century, although the manuscript is dated in the thirteenth century, she appears under the name of Gwenhwyvar. Her character is only slightly developed. In the Lady of the Fountain, we see Gwenhwyvar and her handmaiden sitting by the window busy with their needlework. It is a charming domestic picture, but does not give us much insight into the nature of the queen. In Geraint the Son of Erbin, the queen wishes to go on the stag-hunt with the king and his knights. She is still asleep when they leave in the early morning, and they do not arouse her. When she does awaken, she is displeased that they have gone without her. She is still determined to go, though she finds that there are only two horses left in the stable. She has these saddled, and starts toward the hunt with only one maiden as an

escort. She is firm in her intentions of going to the hunt, but she loses some of her queenly dignity is going thus alone.

In Chrétien de Troyes*, who wrote some of the Arthurian stories in French in the latter part of the twelfth century, Guinevere is represented with two conflicting personalities. In all the stories but Lancelot, she is a gracious, dignified queen and a sweet womanly wife to Arthur. At Arthur's request, she prostrates herself at the feet of Kay to beg him to stay at court. Arthur's wishes have not sufficed to keep him, but the request of the queen causes him to stay. In Yvain she is spoken of as relating ~~te~~ a story "with her customary skill". In Lancelot her character is not quite so pleasing. The story of her unfaithfulness to Arthur is there emphasized. She is not so sweet and gracious a queen here, either. She is taken from court by an invading knight, and Lancelot goes to rescue her. Guinevere is very cold to him after the rescue because he has hesitated for a moment to get up on a cart in which criminals were taken to execution, even when news of her was promised him. He did ~~not~~ get up on the cart for her sake after the moment's hesitation. The queen tells him that he had no business to consider his own reputation in the least when it was a question of rendering service to her. This is the real courtly love attitude--that the knight should never hesitate to go to any length for his lady. Guinevere does not thank him for the important thing, for her rescue, but reproaches him for his failure to be absolutely forgetful of self.

In Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, and the other stories of

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* Translation by William Comfort.

Gawain, the manuscript of which dates from the fourteenth century, but the material of which is far older, Guinevere is described, "gaily clad, sitting on the high dais . Silken was her seat, with a fair canopy over her head, of rich tapestries of Tars, embroidered, and studded with costly gems; fair she was to look upon, with her shining grey eyes, a fairer woman might no man boast himself of having seen"* In the Lady of Lys she goes with the king when he starts to the hunt, "bearing him company even to the entrance of the palace, then she turned her back." She is haughty and imperious in these Gawain stories. In Sir Gawain at the Grail Castle, an unknown knight rides by the pavilion in which the queen is seated, and speaks no word. She is vexed, and declares that the knight must hold her in small account, since he looked not at her nor proffered her greeting. She sends Kay to follow the knight and bring him to pay his respects to her.

Even in the Morte D'Arthur of Malory** there is a conflicting characterization of Guinevere. She is sometimes represented as proud and passionate, unreasonable in her demands upon Lancelot. Then sometimes she is as sweetly gracious and womanly as ever queen could be, She attends the wounded knights, and sacrifices herself to Lancelot's interests. She is described as the finest woman in the universe, of noble and elegant stature, with fair complexion, and fine blue eyes, She is well cultured, with an excellent understanding. Her heart is tender, compassionate, and capable of exalted sentiments.

* Sir Gawain and the Green Knight, Retold in modern prose by Jessie L. Weston, p. 3

** Fifteenth Century.

In the later stories, Guinevere is always represented as the perfect lady of courtly love. She is perfect in beauty, perfect in courtliness, perfect in her duty to her husband, saving her love for Lancelot. She is peerless among women. The relations of Lancelot and Guinevere are the typical courtly love relations. When Lancelot is going to seek Guinevere after she was carried away by the knight, he finds a comb at a spring with some of her golden hairs in it. He takes them,puts them in his bosom and would not part with them if one should offer him in exchange a cartload of emeralds and carbuncles and other precious stones. This is carrying adoration to an extreme. When Guinevere is falsely accused of the poisioning of a Scottish knight, Lancelot hastens to her defense. He fights for her, wins,and proves her innocence. The story of the Maid of Escalot, who falls in love with Lancelot, shows the depth of Guinevere's love for Lancelot. Gawain tells the queen of the maiden whose sleeve Lancelot is wearing on his helmet, and the queen believes that she no longer loved. She goes to her chamber, where she weeps at having lost the best knight that ever bestrode steed. When Lancelot returns she reproaches him for ceasing to love her. Lancelot does not understand, and thinks she wishes to get rid of him. Relations between them are adjusted when the beautiful maiden of Escalot is found dead in the barge that floats to the river landing of Arthur's court.

The Death of Arthur shows Guinevere pursued by Mordred while Arthur is absent at war. The knight represents to her that Arthur is dead, and demands her hand in marriage. She begs a fortnight's grace, to buy clothes in London for herself and her

maidens. Once in London she barricades herself in the Tower of London. In the succeeding battle both Mordred and Arthur, who has returned to save his queen, are killed. Guinevere, who is sad that she has caused the death of Arthur, goes with the ladies to Almesbury where she becomes a nun. Lancelot comes there to beg her to go with him, but she will not. Her strength of purpose will not be shaken by his entreaties. She has not been fair to Arthur in his life time, and she is now doing penance.

Guinevere is a much more ideal woman and queen in the later Arhturian stories than in the earlier ones. She is sweeter, has more queenly dignity, more culture. She is clever, too. Her relations with Lancelot have been idealized and they become two courtly lovers of great charm.

The lady of the Arthurian romance has gained more importance than the ladies of the preceding romances. It is for her that most of the knightly tournaments are held. She comes demanding a champion, and one of Arthur's knights goes to fight for her. In the Knight of the Lion, which is another name for Chretien's Yvain, and the Lady of the Fountain from the Mabinogion, a maiden, who is so fair that, if the God of love had seen her, he would have loved none other, but wounded himself with his own dart, comes to get a champion to save her land which her elder sister is taking from her. She gets Ewain to champion her cause, while Gawain fights incognito for the other sister. Neither knight can gain the advantage, but Arthur will not interfere to divide the land because the elder sister is "such a wicked creature". In the end the sister is trapped into saying

that she is treating the younger girl unjustly and Arthur gives the latter the land. In Sir Libeaus Desconus* maid Elene, "gentle fair and bright; neither countess nor queen, though fair to look upon might be her peer," comes to court to find a knight to rescue her lady. Young Libeaus Desconus is sent to do her bidding. She thinks him too young, and for wrath will neither eat nor drink at the feast because Arthur says he shall go nevertheless. All the time during the journey, Elene taunts and chides the young man for his youth and inexperience. After he has done many valiant deeds, she realizes her champion's value. The ladies seem to think that the knights are made only to fight for them. In Sir Morien, Gawain fights a battle with a knight to rescue a lady whom he is abducting. As soon as the lady is freed she makes her escape, without waiting to thank Gawain, or even to see the outcome of the conflict.

The ladies of Arthurian romances often demand battle of the knights for the merest pretexts. In Sir Libeaus Desconus, one lord calls all knights to battle with him for a gerfalcon for the fairest lady. Libeaus goes to fight with him to gain the prize for Elene, but does not win it because every one admits that Sir Giffroun's lady is by far the more beautiful. She is so graceful and slender that people come from far and wide to look upon her. Her cheeks are red as the rose; her hair "bright as gold wire"; her brows are even as a silken thread, her nose straight, her eyes "grey as glass", her skin milk white. Libeaus fights another battle with twelve knights, just because Elene sees a little dog on the road and wants it. In Chrétien's Percival,

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* Weston, Sir Cleges and Sir Libeaus Desconus.

Gawain jousts in the tournament at the risk of discovery and disgrace because the Maid with the Narrow Sleeves wishes him to justify her faith in him. She and her older sister have been watching the tournament, and she declares that Sir Gawain, who is disguised as a merchant, would make a better knight than her sister's lover. The sister slaps her and they quarrel there on the battlements. Gawain graciously consents to prove the truth of the little girl's statement.

The knight is commonly given the hand of the lady whom he rescues or whom he champions. Libeaus Desconus rescues the lady of Sinadoun, he marries her, and they live many years in joy and gladness. Sir Lancelot kills a great beast which has been invading the land of a noble maiden, and is offered her and her land as a reward. Sir Libeaus is offered the fair maiden Violette, with fifteen castles, by her father Sir Autore, for services done him.

Occasionally the knight must struggle long and hard before he can win the lady he desires. This is in accordance with the rule of the court of love that love which is lightly won is not worth winning. To win Olwen, who is one of the most beautiful maidens in the world--"her fingers are fairer than the blossoms of the wood anemone amidst the spray of the meadow fountain," and her skin is"whiter than the foam of the wave"--Kilhwch, of the Mabinogion story of Kilhwch and Olwen, must do many hard tasks. First he has to seek a year for her, and then her father imposes many tasks almost impossible of fulfillment upon him. Gawain, in the Lady of Lys, must fight with the Baron de Lys through a terrific struggle to win his lady. If the knight should chance to

be overcome in a conflict, it is bad for him. He will lose all chance for his lady, if she be proud. In Castle Orguellous, Gawain conquers the Rich Soudier, but out of the kindness of his heart he lets it appear that he has been conquered so that his antogonist will not be disdained by his lady for losing.

Constancy is due the lady from her knight and honor is due the mother. Sir Percival is told in Sir Morien that his failure to find the grail is due to the fact that he left his mother to die in the forest for sorrow at his departure. Sir Agloval left Sir Morien's mother with a promise to return, but never returned. When sir Morien was old enough, he went se-king through the world for his father to force him to keep his oath. In Parzifal*, the hermit tells Parzifal if he were cast to hell for other sins, but loyal to his wife, God's hand would lift him out.

An interesting bit of mother-love appears in the story of Parzifal. His mother hides herself in the forest with her infant son after the death of the father. She foolishly tries to keep her son absolutely ignorant of arms and knights. When he meets some knights in the forest, and wishes to become one, she sends him to Arthur's court in a fool's garb, hoping that the insult and scoff he receives will send him back to her. She gives him counsel, some wise, some foolish. When he rides away, she dies of grief. Substantially the same story appears in Chrétien's Conte de la Graal, and one very like it is told in the Mabinogion, Peredur the Son of Evrawc. Peredur's mother was a "scheming and thoughtful woman, and she was very solicitous concerning this her only son and his possessions."

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*Wolfram von Eschenbach, thirteenth century.

There are other interesting women in the Arthurian stories in addition to Guinevere. There are two very interesting ones in The Knight of the Lion, or Yvain, the mistress, Laudine, and the maid, Lunetta. Ewain (Yvain) meets the maid after he has poured water on the fountain*, mortally wounded the knight who defends the fountain, and followed him to his castle. Only through the help of Lunetta, who thinks he is too fine a knight to be killed, does he escape the wrath of the dead knight's followers. She even plans a union between Ewain and her mistress Laudine. Laudine has been very sorrowful at the death of her husband, weeping and tearing her hair. But she marries Ewain in order to have some one to defend her fountain, and seems to love him very much. There is no suggestion of inconstancy about her loving Ewain. It is perfectly natural that so valiant a knight as he should inspire love.

After a time Ewain wishes to return to Arthur's court. Laudine gives him permission, if he will be sure to return in one year. Should he fail to do so,he shall lose her love. He forgets that a year has gone, and fails to return. Laudine sends a messenger to Arthur's court to tell him that he is cast off. Then Ewain is in despair. He loves her deeply, and forgetfulness was his only fault. His relation to his wife is that of the ordinary lover to his mistress. She demands constancy above all, and he failed to give it. Ewain wanders about the forest, and becomes insane in grieving over his fault and the loss of his love. At length he is cured by some precious ointment which a rich lady instructs her maid to rub upon his head. This incident

*The story is essentially the same as The Lady of the Fountain in the Mabinogion.

gives an interesting insight into character. The mistress had instructed the maid to use only as much as was necessary. The girl wanted to be sure that the cure would be complete and rubbed on the cintment recklessly until the box was empty. Then she threw the box in the stream and told her mistress that she had dropped it accidentally. She preferred a scolding for carelessness to one for extravagance.

After Ewain is cured he sets about doing chivalrous deeds in order to win back his lady's good will, if possible. He rescues many maidens in distress and fights with many knights. A lion which he has helped attaches itself to him and he thus gains his name "The Knight of the Lion". One day he finds Lunetta, who is about to be burned at the stake because of her share in the marriage of her mistress and Ewain. He fights as her champion and saves her from death. Not at all dismayed by the result of her previous intervention, she promises to intercede for him with her lady. Lunetta uses her wits and fixes a story to tell the lady. Ewain, or the Knight of the Lion as she calls him, is in disfavor with his lady, and will never more be happy until he is restored to her love. Will not Laudine do all in her power to assist him in regaining the love and grace that he once had? As a recompence, he will defend her fountain, which has long been defenseless. Of course the lady consents, to find that it is her own husband whom she must restore to her own good graces. She is angry at first, and then she relents, forgiving both Lunetta and Ewain.

Enide, of Chrétien's Erec et Enide, is given a rather full characterization. "The maid was charming, in sooth, for Nature had used all her skill in forming her. Nature herself had marvelled

more than five hundred times how upon this one occasion she had succeeded in creating such a perfect thing."---She is fair indeed;"but greater far than her beauty is her intelligence. God never created any one so discreet and of such open heart."* In her there is no lack of courtesy; when her father bids her care for Erec's horse, she does so at once. Erec takes her to court in her old, poor dress, because he wishes Guinevere to be the only one to give her clothing. Enide goes with him with no false modesty over her poor attire. When the king offers her the kiss of the white Stag for the most beautiful lady, she sensibly permits. Indeed, she would have been discourteous to resent it. On the way to Erec's kingdom of Lac, they stop at the church to pray. She arises from prayer, and crosses herself, "as a well-bred dame should do."

After his marriage, Erec takes no more delight in knightly combats, so that his fellows begin to call him craven. Enide is much grieved at this, but hesitates to tell him. When he discovers the cause for her sorrow, he orders her to clothe herself in her richest dress, and they set off together with no attendants. He treats her coldly, and orders her not to speak to him at all. She is very sad at having angered him, and fully means to obey his command, but time after time she speaks to him to warn him of danger. He scolds her each time, but forgives her. One night the count at whose place they are resting seeks her love. She refuses, then seeing that Erec's life is in danger, pretends to give it. She is only plotting to extricate herself and Erec. "Well she knows how to deceive a fool, when she puts her mind to it." She is true and loyal to Erec, though he is treating her

*Chretien de Troyes, Erec and Enide, p. 6,8

rudely, and disgracefully.

After many adventures and much suffering, Erec confesses to Fnide that his actions have only been a test of her. The test has been successful, and he is sure that she loves him, and that he will love her always. Enide has taken all her trials very sweetly, and now that happiness has returned to her, she takes it sweetly too.

Soredamours in Chrétien's Cligés is interesting because of the introspective analyses she makes of love. She has always scorned love, although she is so charming and fair that she might fitly have learned of love, if she had pleased. Then she falls in love with Alexander, son of the emperor of Greece, who has come to Arthur's court to learn of knighthood. She pretends to herself that she does not love Alexander, and goes through a lengthy process of proof. Alexander knows he loves Soredamours, but he is too diffident to tell her about his love. The queen perceives that Soredamours looks at the ground when she is near Alexander, and is first pale , then crimson, and knows the cause. It is she who finally makes the two confess their love. Alexander even hesitated to mention his heart's desire when the king offered him anything save only the queen and crown for his services. He is afraid of displeasing Soredamours.

Cligés is the son of Soredamours and Alexander. His story reminds us of Tristan. He falls in love with Fenice, who is pledged to marry his uncle Alis. He is too honorable to tell Fenice of his love, and of course she will not tell him--"No wonder if she hesitates to begin, for a maid must be a simple,

shrinking thing."* He does not tell her, until he has returned from Brittany, and she asks him if he has given his heart to any one there. She is tortured with anxiety until he answers her that he has not, for he left his heart with her when he went. Cligés wishes her to go to Brittany with him, but she cannot do it, she tells him, for then she would be no better than Iseult in the eyes of the world. She devises a scheme by which she will take a potion which will make her appear dead. Then Cligés shall steal her body, and hide her in some place where she can never be found. The plan succeeds, and the two have more than a year of happiness before they are found. Then they flee to Arthur for aid. Alis dies of grief because he cannot find Cligés to revenge himself. Then Cligés becomes emperor, marries Fenice, and lives happily ever after.

The lady of the Arthurian romances is indeed beautiful. Every succeeding one is the most beautiful maiden in the world. Sometimes we wonder how every one can be the most beautiful of all! She is perfect in every detail. She has golden hair, eyes blue as the sky, skin white as snow. Often she is "lylly-whyte", or "white as thorne-blossoms". In very few instances is the lady represented in any way but as the loveliest being imaginable. In Chretièn's Conte de la Groal, there is a maiden who wanders near her lover's burial place, mourning for his death. She has become ugly through weeping and exposure. In ~~a~~ one story, ~~of~~ Percival ~~he~~ kisses a lady by force, in his ignorance of the proprieties, and she is then compelled to do penance by her husband! She becomes worn and tanned in the sun, and loses all her beauty. When

*Chretien de Troyes, Erec and Enide, p. 163

Percival vindicates her, and her husband allows her to seek rest and repose, her beauty is restored. Enide, too, loses a great deal of her loveliness in the time that Erec is testing her loyalty, but when the test is over, she soon regains it.--"Now that Enide was very happy and had everything she desired, her great beauty returned to her; for her great distress had affected her so much that she was very pale and wan." Still we consider the lady of Arthurian romance the ideal in beauty. She was certainly the ideal of her knightly lover.

III. Woman in Epic and Romance: Conclusions.

The woman of the epic has a far less prominent place than the woman of romance. She seems more of a part of the stage setting than one of the actors. The women in Beowulf have nothing like the distinctive personalities of the women in the Arthurian romances. They are stately, dignified queens, giving presents and passing around the mead-cup. But they stay at home, taking no part in the heroic deeds of their husbands, Their duty is to stay at home in order to receive the conquering hero on his return, and to give him his well-won praise. The women are honored and revered, and there is a well-established type to which they must all conform, the generous, lady-like queen. We remember the condemnation of Thrytho, who was niggardly in her giving, jealous and vindictive. She is introduced into the story more to show what should be than an a character for her own sake.

The woman of the Nibelungenlied has a relatively more important place. There we find her really taking an important part in the action. In the first part of the Nibelungenlied we have a charming domestic picture of Queen Uté and her daughter Kriemhilda, watching the tournaments from their windows, and taking delight in their fine garments. They are as generous in their giving as Wealtheow and Hygd, and have the same reverence from their subjects. But their characters are more fully developed, and little feminine touches are given them. They are described in their splendid garments, not fully it is true, but enough to give an idea of the magnificence of their costuming. Brunhilda is distinctly different from the gentle Kriemhilda. She is strong and venturesome, full of life and spirit. There is a splendid

bit of characterization in the quarrel between Kriemhilda and her sister-in-law. Both queens are so sure that the husband of the other is inferior to her own that they become very indignant with each other.

Kriemhilda becomes entirely different after the death of Siegfried. She loses all her gentleness and becomes a vengeful goddess, seeking to destroy her husband's slayers. Her position is far more important in this new role, for it is her desire which motivates the action of the latter half of the story. She is fierce and merciless to the very end. It is not a pleasing picture that we have of her, but it shows that the position of woman has advanced, if it is possible for a woman to call three kings to her country and destroy them for the sake of revenge.

In the Song of Roland there might seem to be a step backward in the place of woman, since she takes ~~a~~ little part in the movement of the story, if it were not that the item of love appears. In Beowulf there has been no suggestion of love at all, and in the Nibelungenlied the love has not been of the romantic type. There it has been more the love of possession. Siegfried wishes to win Kriemhilda because she is beautiful and good, while Gunther's spirit of adventure is aroused by the deeds which must be performed to win Brunhilda. There is a trace of romantic love in the way in which Kriemhilda watches Siegfried at the games and longs to meet him, but it is not carried to the extent that it is in Roland. There Aude is no longer able to live when she learns that Roland is dead. That is the extreme of romantic love, though it is not so designated or described in the poem. It is a touching picture that we have of Aude.

Bramimonde, wife of the Saracen Marsile, marks a step forward. She is a loyal wife, encouraging her husband in battle, and planning for him. She makes us think of Orable, wife of William of Orange, who is brave and dauntless to save her husband's castle from capture in his absence. Orable has an interesting personality, quite unlike the women of the early epics, who are planned after a set type. She is a loyal wife; she is interested in her husband's affairs, encourages and helps him. Like the ladies of the other Chanson de geste , she is not coy, but makes her preference known before she is asked. She prepares the way for the bold damsels who follow.

In the early romances, we find varying types of women. There is Rimenhild, who falls in love with Horn and tells him so without waiting for him to woo her, and there is Felice, who disdains her lover's advances until he has become the foremost knight in the land. Josyan of Bevis of Hampton is of much the same type as Rimenhild, but Goldborough of Havelok the Dane is not quite like Felice. She is a dignified creature, marrying Havelok under compulsion, quite without love. The characterization of women in these early romances does show two tendancies, however, one toward the shameless, lovemaking Saracen girl, the other toward the remote lady of courtly romance. There is a difference in the importance of the positions of the women of these early romances. Felice, the haughty one, influences Guy's whole life. She sends him to do noble deeds, and it is this which causes his repentance and his life as a pilgrim. He thought it wicked to have slaughtered so many knights merely for woman's sake. Goldborough has little to do in shaping Havelok's destiny, though we

do find her urging him to seek out and win again his rightful kingdom. Rimenhild is more a deterrent upon Horn's advancement than a help. She is anxious to have him do brave things, but she needs him to rescue her and calls him home from his travels two successive times.

The women of these romances are not fully characterized. They have each one or two attributes which distinguish them, but that is all. They resemble the early epic women in that. They are not described as to personal appearance to any great extent, and their habits, their occupations, their interests are not made very clear. Woman is not yet in a position of very great importance.

The lai introduces a type of woman which has been only hinted at before. This is the cruel, unfeeling, unpleasant woman such as is found in the lay of the Were-wolf. She is nice enough in the beginning, but when she has found her husband's secret she condemns him to a wolf's life forever to rid herself of him. She seems to have no qualms of conscience, and does not appear to think of the cruelty of her act in the least. It is self first with her. In the lai, too, the beauty of the heroine begins to be stressed. Guingamor finds the maiden in the forest the most beautiful being in the world, and the wonderful beauty of the Maiden of Ash is the thing which attracts her lord to her, though her goodness and wisdom win the love of his subjects. The fairy love of Sir Launfal is the "fairest of all fair women in this world". The women of Marie de France's lais are not at all of the same type. They seem to have suggestions of the women who have gone before as well as the women who follow. The renunciation of Guileduc, of Eliduc, is an act worthy of the stateliest

epic queen. The sweet self-sacrifices of the Maiden of Ash is another act of epic greatness. The queen in Guingamor, who tempts the hero and then plots for his destruction is a foreshadowing of the vindictive woman of later romances. The love of Sir Launfal for the fairy Triamour is precisely like that of the Court of Love, and Triamour is the ideal lady of courtly romance in beauty and in attribute. The woman of the lai cannot be characterized as a type in herself, but as a composite of woman before and after. The lai is a transition from the one to the other.

The miscellaneous romances naturally include a variety of women of varying importance. There is the lovely other-world heroine who dominates the thought and action of her lover after the fashion of the Court of Love. There is the virtuous woman of the fabliau-like "moral" romance whose virtue is made the turning point of the story. Then there is the passionate girl of the Saracen romances, who rescues the Christian knight and marries him. All these elements are combined in the lady of the courtly romance, who is the culmination of the growth of centuries. She has all the dignity of Wealtheow, all the beauty of Triamour, all the virtue of the Ash Maiden, all the passion of Margery. The idea of virtue is not the same as it was in the days of Wealtheow, however; the courtly lady is virtuous if she is true to one lover only whatever fault there is in that one attachment. And the passion of the lady of courtly romance is curbed, is hidden. Her lover must woo her--she will make no advances. There is a reflection of Felice in this lady.

The most interesting point about the ladies of the courtly and the Arthurian romances is that all of them conform to the same type. There are slight differences in delineation, of course,

but the model is the same. The lady must look like the standard model, she must act like her, she must feel like her, she must think like her. She always has the same golden hair, the same blue eyes, the same wonderfully white skin. She has the same art as a physician. There is Felice, who heals Guy of Warwick; there is Nicolete, who puts Aucassin's shoulder back in place after it has been dislocated by a fall from a horse; there is the wife of Amis, who treats the leprosy of Amilon; there is Rosemonde who heals the wounds of Elias of St. Giles; there is Iseult who is noted for her knowledge of medicine; there is Enide who is well-skilled in the medical art. These are only some of the examples. A knowledge of medicine was essential to the mediaeval woman, because the tournaments and combats of the knights caused many wounds which must have care. The woman was the natural one to give the care.

The woman of romance was the ideal of her knight, who loved her and fought for her. And yet she was often called upon to do menial tasks for him. When Erec comes to the house of Enide's father, Enide must take his horse to the stable, take off Erec's arms, wash him, and prepare the meal for him. Even after they are married, Enide is sent on to give orders to the host at the inn. Ewain, the Knight of the Lion, is waited upon by the daughter of a knight whom he visits. Josyan in Bevis of Hampton takes the arms of Bevis and cares for him at the end of the day. Other ladies do small acts of service to the knights.

The position of woman in regard to marriage is peculiar. Political marriages are very common, and the idea is not new with romance. Even in Beowulf we find Hrothgar and Hygelac giving

their daughters in marriage to gain peace and union of kingdoms. The girl has small choice. Her father marries her in most cases whether she will or no. The daughter of Guerin does chose her husband herself, but she has a lenient father. Iseult is married to King Mark, although she loves Tristan, because Mark is a powerful king, and has asked her hand in marriage. Fenice must marry Alis, the emperor, when she loves Cligés, his nephew. Even at that another powerful suitor makes war upon her father for his disposal of her. The disposal of heiresses is frequently the cause of wars. Every maiden has many more suitors than she can accept, and the favored one must battle with the others. Two interesting examples of the marriage of women are found in the Mabinogion. In Manawyddon the Son of Llyr, Pryderi offers his mother Rhiannon in marriage to Manawyddan. She is accepted and married without being allowed to state her preference at all. Then in Lluda and Llevelys, Llevelys goes to France to ask the hand of a princess in marriage. Since her mother is dead, the nobles and princes of France hold a joint council in which it is decided to give her and the crown of the kingdom with her to Llevelys. Oftentimes the lady is given in marriage to the knight who will perform some service in the kingdom. Iseult is to be given to anyone who will slay a dragon which has been troubling the land. A maiden comes to Arthur's court demanding that he allow her a champion to procure the white foot of a certain stag. He sends a knight on the errand with the provision that whoever is successful shall have her in marriage. The lady is usually won by mighty deeds. If she has the power of bestowing herself in marriage, she will grant herself only to a hero. If she has

no such power, the knight must beat down the barriers around her before he can have her.

Interesting characteristics of the individual women are brought out in incidents throughout the various romances. Some of them are typical of the attitude of woman as a class at that time. In Percival, Blancheflour awakens early in the morning and wishes to go for a walk in the garden. She gets up and robes herself without the aid of her women. The author seems to regard this as a remarkable incident. In Kilhwch and Olwen, Kilhwch gives a ring to a herdsman, who drops it into his glove-finger, where his wife finds it. She demands where he found it, and he tells her that it came from the finger of a corpse washed up on the shore. She refuses to believe his story unless he will show her the body. In Taliesin, Elphin discovers that his enemies are trying to play a trick on him by substituting another woman for his wife, because his wife pared her nails every Saturday night, and the other lady's fingers were soiled. In the Wedding of Sir Gawain, Arthur is to forfeit his head to a warrior whom he has deprived of his lands if he cannot tell within a twelve month what is is that women most desire. He seeks far and wide to learn the answer, to find in the end that it is sovereignty. Sometimes we find the women of the romances exposed to misfortune which they bear with the utmost magnanimity. Queen Bertha, wife of Pepin, king of France, is driven from her kingdom by a servant girl who looks very much like her. She takes her misfortune bravely and is forgiving to her husband who has been so ready to be deceived.

An interesting summary of the woman of the thirteenth century

is given by Bartholomew Anglicus, an English Franciscan. "Men behove to take heed of maiden; for they be tender of complexion; small, pliant and fair of disposition of body; shamefest, fearful and merry. Touching outward disposition, they be well nurtured, demure and soft of speech, and well ware of what they say; and delicate in their apparel. And for a woman is more meeker than a man, and she weepeth sooner , and is more envious and more laughing, and loving, and the malice of the soul is more in a woman than in a man. And she is of feeble kind, and she maketh more lesings (untruths), and is more shamefest, and more slow in working and in moving than is a man."*

The occupations of woman in the romances are very much the same as in ordinary life at that time. She is domestic, sewing and embroidering. Queen Bertha increases the friendship of the daughters of Symon, her preserver, for her by teaching them new stitches of embroidery with which they are not familiar. The girls are astonished at excellence such as they had never seen before. A special portion of the education of princesses was to excel in embroidery and in other work of a similar description. Maidens were not supposed to take great interest in other things. In Renaud de Montaubon, Duke Beuve rebukes his wife for talking to him of his warfare, telling her to go to her room, and dress her well, to go and give advice to her maids, to think of twisting silk, which is her business. The amusements of the ladies are simple too. Dancing is one form of amusement; in the Romance of the Rose there is a carole in the garden, and in the Chatelaine of Vergi all the ladies are asked to a ball at the castle. We find Blonde of Oxford making a chaplet of flowers in the garden, and

*Mediaeval Lore p. 52 (written about 1260)

others of the ladies walking in their gardens, Chess is a game common in the Arthurian romances, as are also card games. The ladies often went riding, and sometimes went to hunt, But in general their lives were rather restricted. What wonder that they toyed with love for excitement?

There are two types of love represented in the romances, the passionate and the chivalrous. The former belongs to the older romances in the main, while the latter is associated with the later ones. The woman of the passionate love makes the advances, sometimes in a rather bold and disgusting manner. The women of Horn, Bevis of Hampton, William of Palerin, Amis and Amiloun belong to the first type. The Saracen girls woo the Christian knights who come to their courts. The chivalrous love is the kind found between Lancelot and Guinevere, Tristan and Iseult, Troilus and Creseyde, that found in Arthur's court and in the Court of Love. This courtly love is an outgrowth of religious mysticisin, which emphasizes contemplation of the Virgin only, and forgetfulness of the rest of the world. The knight applied this love to his lady, until the lady became a symbol of the divine. Rules were developed for this love which must be kept secret. The lover must be absolutely devoted to his lady , and must remain faithful always. If a man is cured of his love, it is a sign that he never loved. The lady is perfect, a hint of her divine symbolism.

The change in social conditions has perhaps been responsible for the development of this ideal lady. In the time of the epic, there was a sort of communal life, in which the queen was able to mingle freely with her subjects, men and women. With the

development of feudalism, woman's place became more and more distinctly a domestic one. She was not supposed to see her neighbors, for, in all probability, her father,or husband, or brothers, were engaged in warfare with the people of the neighboring castle. Each family became a segregated group. Thus it was that the lady welcomed any diversions, in whatever form it came. When the travelling troubadour sang to her and made love to her, it was very pleasing. She became his ideal, and then the ideal of some knight who heard the troubadour sing of her wonderful charms. At length every woman, in romance at least, becomes an ideal.

Along with the development of the ideal lady has come a woman of opposite attributes who is used as a foil for the beauty and goodness of the lady. She is an outgrowth of the hatred that the people of the Mediaeval times had for Eve and her sins. This type of woman is found more in the fabliau than in romance, but there are some examples in romance . There is the wife of Amis, who turns him out of doors because he has become a leper through helping his true friend Amiloun. The queen of India makes love to Generydes,of Generydes , and resolves to kill him when he refuses her. Then there is the cruel stepmother in the story of the Swan-Knight. She accuses her daughter of wrong doing, has her imprisoned in the tower, and sends her grand-children into the forest to be killed. The mother-in-law of Emare, a girl of the other word, objects to her son's marriage because the wife seems to be no "earthly thing". In the absence of her son, she falsely accuses Emare, and sets her adrift in a boat to live or die as she is able.

The maid of romance has an important place. Her conventional part is to receive the confidences of her mistress, to comfort her when distressed, and to be on hand to assist in emergencies. Lunetta in The Knight of the Lion plays even more than the ordinary role. She arranges and promotes a marriage for her lady, before the mistress has suggested it. Iseult's maid, or rather friend, is one of the most faithful of all the maids of romance. Fenice, of Cliges, has an old nurse upon whom she depends for help. Many of the mediaeval romances would have been unfinished were it not for the maids. The maid is often sent to bring aid for her mistress. It is quite the common thing for a young maiden to come to Arthur's court seeking a knight for a champion. It is not always the maid--sometimes the mistress herself comes to the court for her champion.

Thus we find that it is not until the time of the Arthurian romance that woman exerts a great influence on the world of literature. The woman of the epic has little place because the poems are motivated by material force. But in romance, woman has the center of the field. She forms the motive for the deeds of the knights. As Sir Tristan says,"a knight may never be of prowess but if he be a lover." Woman begins to appear as the great moving force of history. The great qualities of woman influence the whole course of events more powerfully than those of man. By reason of this increase in her importance we find woman portrayed for us much more fully in romance than in the epic. Her personal appearance, her traits of character, her habits, her surroundings, are all made more clear to us. Woman is but a type in the epic, and she is again but a type in the Arthurian romance, but the

type of the lady of romance marks a great development from the type of the queen of the epic.

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